

T H E
Christian Instructor:
O R,
RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

CONTAINING

A SYSTEM of the most plain and solid EVIDENCES in Proof of *Natural and Revealed Religion*, level to common Capacities; and adapted for Youth before their Entrance upon Business.

By ISAAC TOMS, of Hadleigh in the County of Suffolk.

With a Recommendatory Preface, by the Rev. JOHN BARKER, and the Rev. SAMUEL CHANDLER.

“ There is no young Person of a tolerable Capacity, of the Age
“ of ten, or upwards, but may be led on gradually through a
“ Scheme, or View of Natural and Revealed Religion, from
“ the first Principles of common Sense.” Thoughts on Education by the Author of *Britain’s Remembrancer*.

“ Reason pursu’d is Faith; and unpursu’d

“ Where Proof invites, ’tis Reason, then, no more.”

COMPL. IV.

Who, by reason of Use, have their Senses *exercised* (*γυμνασμένα*, as Wrestlers are trained up *certamine gymnico*) to discern (*περὶ διάνευσιν* for Severing and Differencing) between Good and Evil. HEB. v. 14.

L O N D O N :

Printed for R. HETT, at the Bible and Crown in the Poultry; and sold by W. CREIGHTON in Ipswich; A. TOZER in Exeter; and T. CADELL in Bristol. MDCCXLVIII.

(Price bound 1 s. 6 d. or 15 s. per Dozen.)

43

4

6

808



THE RECOMMENDATION.

TO season the Minds of Children with good Instruction, as soon as Reason begins to dawn, is a Duty incumbent on all to whom their Education is committed ; as this is the most effectual Method of restraining the Power and Influence of corrupt Affections, which naturally take Root in young and uncultivated Minds, and often prove the Sources of Wickedness and Misery in the After-Stages of Life ; and yet nothing, perhaps, has been, and is so little attended to, in the modern Plan of Education.—To ask them proper Questions suitable to their Age and Capacity, so as to open their Minds, by degrees, and to convey Light and Knowledge into them with Ease and Delight ; to excite and assist their Enquiries after moral and divine Truths, and to make and leave the Impression of their Excellence and Importance deep on their Hearts ; it must be owned, is an Undertaking, in the Execution of which great Piety and Wisdom are requisite.

iv *The* RECOMMENDATION.

With the most benevolent and Christian Disposition to assist those who are well disposed in so good a Work, we are persuaded the Author of these *Religious Exercises* ventures on the Publication of them; and there is so much good Sense, and such a warm and friendly Spirit of Piety breathing in them; such a Plainness and Perspicuity in the Questions proposed, and so many Illustrations of their Truth, by sensible and familiar Objects, that we cannot but think they are well adapted to the Persons and Purposes for which they are intended: And as there is nothing we more ardently wish than the Prosperity of the rising Generation, we cannot but recommend the deserving Author, and his pious Attempt, to the Blessing of God, and the favourable Acceptance of the Public.

LONDON,
May 4, 1748.

JOHN BARKER,
SAMUEL CHANDLER.

THE

TO THE
R E A D E R:

P A R T I C U L A R L Y

Parents and Instructors of YOUTH,

AS the following Performance is designed for the Benefit of the rising Age, and aims at informing their Judgments, and settling them in religious Principles before they launch out into Business and Employments for Life; I know not better how to introduce it than with the Advice of the renowned Lord *Verulam* in his Discourse on Self-Policy, or the Doctrine of rising in Life—" Rather than eagerly pursue Fortune, Mankind should rest upon the corner Stone of *Divinity* and *Philosophy*, both which nearly agree in the Thing which ought first to be sought. For *Divinity* says, *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all other Things shall be added unto you*: So *Philosophy* directs us first to seek the Goods of the Mind; and the rest will either be supplied or not much want-

“ ed.”*——Advice worthy to be improved by all who wish well to themselves or their Offspring: And therefore all such should most carefully discover the solid Basis on which Religion and Virtue stand, and seek by all Means to inform the opening Mind, of the *full Evidences* which are at hand, in proof that Religion is the *greatest and most important Reality*; that so they may *from Judgment*, and with *Satisfaction*, rest on this *Corner Stone*, and not think it weak and worthless as the Sand. But Prayer, *fervent Prayer*, should accompany such Endeavours; because in the Words of the above celebrated Writer——“ This Foundation laid by *human Hands*, is sometimes placed upon the *Sand* “ —yet the same Foundation is ever by the “ *divine Hand*, fix’d upon a *Rock*.” If ever there was a call for Parents and Instructors to *labour this Point* it is at present, for Reasons too many and obvious to need the mentioning. The vast importance of laying a good Foundation by religious Education is almost universally granted; and yet how deplorably it is neglected in this Day of *Infidelity, Luxury, Gaiety, and Inconsideration*.——It may therefore be said to be the *το εργον* of all who wish well to Youth, who desire the Preservation of *true Religion*, (Superstition and Popery may indeed well enough

* *Vide Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, by Peter Shaw, M. D. Vol. 1st. p. 233.

subsist without it) who long to have our Isles a Praise in the Earth for *Piety, Probity, and Virtue*; the *grand Endeavour* of such should be to convey the *clearest Notices* of divine Truths to the Understandings of young Persons, and the *deepest Impressions* of the *Good or Evil* that will follow on *practical* regarding or disregarding them——It being thus, the Author of the ensuing Work hopes for a candid Reception, because his Design is certainly commendable, however he may fail in executing it: And as his aim was not Eloquence, or to gain the Name of a fine Writer, but to convey, in the easiest Manner, the Knowledge of the *most weighty Truths*, and stir up *suitable Affections* with regard to them; and all this in ignorant, weak, and tender Minds, it is hoped this will be a sufficient Apology for the Method and Manner of handling the various Subjects. There is an endeavour to lead the Pupil Step by Step from the first Principles of common Sense, and intuitive Truths to the noblest Heights of Christian Faith, chiefly arguing from such received Principles or Conclusions drawn from them: And to this it is owing that the *Answers* are not in common set down, but left for the Learner to supply. And indeed its more for the Benefit of the Reader and the Scholar, to form the Answer in their own Minds, (this must engage their *Attention*) than to have them printed before their Eyes.

Eyes. *Attention* is the Thing wanted on our part, and for want of this, Ignorance, *gross Ignorance*; reigns even when means of Instruction in the ordinary Way of Question and Answer are diligently used. How common to observe that plain Truths are enquired after in Questions put to Youth, and the Answer as plainly returned, and the Answerer knows never the more? The Reason is there was *no Attention*, no exercise of Judgment, but only of Memory. We all know it is not *reading*, or *treasuring up in the Memory*; that of itself *informs the Judgment* or affects the Heart; but *Apprehension, Discernment*, considering the Agreement or Disagreement of Ideas with what is true or false, right or wrong, good, bad, or indifferent. These Considerations will, its believed, justify this Method; or if more need be said, there are many Reasons hinted at in the Preface to *The humble Attempt to assist Parents and Masters in the Instruction of Youth*.

That this Work, which has taken up much Time and Pains in composing, may be prospered, it is first laid at the Redeemer's Feet for heavenly Benediction, and then presented to all into whose Hands it shall come, for their serious Reading and faithful Improvement; with earnest Request that *Instructors* will not grudge the Pains to be taken with *Learners*, in putting the Interrogations to their Judgment, and *waiting their Answers*.

Answers. — O, Sirs! be not indolent and unconcerned in such weighty Work! Remember the *Youth* are shortly to be *Men*.

— Will it be honourable to you or them, that they prove Men of no Knowledge in Religion, and Morality; and of no Principles but what are *bad*? Remember they are soon to launch out from under your Eye, into the midst of Temptations from Atheists and Infidels, Sadducees and Sensualists, Popish Emissaries, (many more of these thro' this Nation than is generally apprehended) and superstitious formal Professors, who are Enemies to the Power of Godliness as much as any; and it must be owned, (after the most charitable Judgment is formed of this Matter) with great Grief, that notwithstanding all the Judgments and Mercies God has visited this Kingdom with, it still abounds with Men of these odious Characters. Be tender therefore of the Souls of your *dear Charge*, and spare no Pains in labouring to fix in them (under the Blessing of God on your laudable Endeavours) right Apprehensions of the Nature of *true Religion*, guarding against Popery, Superstition and Bigotry, on the one hand, and Infidelity, Libertinism, and Indifference, as to Articles of Faith, and all Religion, on the other. No Subjects can be more important than those before you for Consideration. May your Endeavours
be

be proportioned, and Success as remarkable! Youth thus trained up, and then placed in *religious Families*, may be the *Glory* of the next Age, an Ornament to Religion, and Bulwark against the lawless Power of *France*, and the unwearied Attempts of *Rome*, to enslave, in Body and Mind, a free and brave People. That you may sincerely use, and God graciously prosper this Work, is, and shall be, the unfeigned Prayer of the Author.

HADLEIGH,
Dec. 9th, 1747.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THOUGH the following Work be cast into the Form of a Series of Interrogations, for the greater Benefit of those who are to instruct, and to be instructed, yet it may be read, with little, if any Inconvenience, as a *connected Discourse*, under the several Heads specified, without any particular Regard to the Questions as being distinct. And thus it may serve the Christian in his Closet Exercises, and the Master of the Family, when reading to his Children and Servants, and all others, as well as the Instructor, when professedly engaged in forming the Minds of Youth to the Discernment of these Truths.

BOOKS lately published, printed for R.
HETT, at the *Bible and Crown* in the
Poultry.

I. **A**N humble Attempt to assist Parents and Masters, in the religious Instruction of Youth ; being Explanations on sixteen select Passages of Scripture : Containing some of the principal Heads of Christian Faith and Practice. With a plain and familiar Examination on, and application of each, to the Judgment and Conscience of the Learner. To which are added, a Letter of compassionate Advice to the young Reader, Morning and Evening Prayers, short Meditations, &c. The second Edition, with Additions, leading the Instructor to guard his Pupil against many of the evil Principles and Practices of Popery. Price 4 d. or 3 s. 6 d. per Dozen.

II. An earnest Invitation to all profane Persons to repent : Or, An Help for Recovery from the detestable Habit of profane Swearing and Cursing : With a special Regard to the Army and Navy.

III. The Sabbath-Breakers Monitor ; or an earnest Invitation to all Violators of the Lord's-Day to return to their Duty.

These two Tracts are 3 d. each, single, or 16 s. per Hundred to those pious and truly charitable Persons, who lend their Assistance to put a Stop to Profaneness and Immorality, by dispersing among the Poor, Tracts suited to those Purposes.

IV.

IV. A friendly Address to *British* Mariners, more especially those in the Royal Navy. Price 2 *d.* or 10 *s.* 6 *d.* *per* Hund. to those that give them away.

V. The shining Convert; or Riches of Divine Grace display'd: Being Memoirs of God's gracious Dealing with a poor illiterate Husbandman *Thomas Seeger*, of *Kersey* in *Suffolk*, issuing in his Conversion, from a most dreadful State of Ignorance and Irreligion, to eminent Piety and Virtue. Calculated for general Benefit, especially to advance the Redeemer's Honour, establish, improve, and comfort his faithful Followers. To which is added, a Sermon occasioned by his happy Death.

Price 1 s. or 9 s. per Dozen, to those truly pious Persons who are disposed to promote a like Reformation, by giving these Memoirs away, as Example draws where Precept fails.

VI. The insincere Professor, and real Christian; delineated in two opposite Descriptions. 1. Of the governing Qualities of the Soul, and Practice of the Life of an unconverted or insincere Professor. 2. The Qualities and Practice of a true Convert, or sincere Christian; with Exhortation and Advice to each. Designed to make the Work of Self-Acquaintance and Examination more easy and profitable, both to young and old. To which are added, Prayers on several Occasions, for a Family and a private Person.

Price 6 d. or 5 s. per Dozen to those that give them away.

All the above by ISAAC TOMS.

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction to Religious Exercises, containing a Definition of the Term Religion, and Explanations on it, &c.

Between Tutor and Pupil:

SECTION I.

Definition and Explanation.

Tutor. **I** Am going to instruct you in Religion, and it is therefore proper that you should first understand what is meant by it.

By Religion here, is meant *such an even Regard to Almighty God, as produces a constant Desire and Endeavour to please and obey him in all Things.* The Person, who is daily desiring and endeavouring to please and obey God in all things, is a *religious Person*.

Q. From this Definition can you tell me who is a religious Person?—

Pupil. A. The Person who is daily desiring, &c.

B

Q. If

2 RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

Q. If a Person professes, and appears to have a regard to God, is that enough, tho' it is not hearty and real?

Q. If a Person has some true Regard to God, and shews it Morning and Evening, and one Day in seven, is this enough to make him religious?

Q. If a Person has such a true Regard to God, as produces Wishes and Desires, but no proper Endeavours, is he religious?

Q. Must a truly religious Man have such a daily Regard to God, as will produce a daily Endeavour *to do his Will*, as well as produce some Wishes?

Q. Is it enough, if a Man endeavour to obey God in some particular Instances?

Q. Must he resolve not to allow himself in the Practice of any thing God forbids?

Q. May not he allow himself to omit some things, which he knows God requires?

Q. Must he endeavour to obey, and please God *in all Things*?

Q. And this daily?

Q. Don't you think it is enough if a Man is honest, charitable, and sober, though he does not worship and honour God?

Q. Or if a Man worships God in public or private, and appear pious, is it not enough, though he be not righteous, merciful, charitable and sober?

Q. Won't great Pretences to Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and Zeal for Christian Reli-

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES. 3

Religion, together with the Appearance of Piety, be enough?

Q. Must Truth and Justice, Mercy and Charity towards all Men, and Sobriety, Purity, Humility, and heavenly Mindedness go together, with a sacred Regard to the Honour of God, and Jesus Christ?

Q. Give me therefore the four general Things, which are included under Christian Religion.

A. Piety to God, Faith in Christ, Righteousness and Charity towards Men, and Sobriety in ourselves.—Or,

A pious Heart to God, Faith in his Son,
Just, kind, and sober—So the Prize is won.

APPLICATION.

Upon the whole therefore, I hope you understand what Religion is, and will take care to remember it must proceed from the *Heart*, not Form and Custom; it must be a daily Desire and Endeavour, not only *once in a great while*; and it must be to do all God's Commands; not this or that only, as suits best with Inclination or Interest. Pray take care that God has your *Heart* first, and then your Life.—Never separate (as many in this Age do) Righteousness and Sobriety from Piety to God, and Faith in Christ; who count it enough, if they are honest, merciful and sober, though they withhold sincere Worship, Dependence,

4 RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

Faith; Fear, and Love from God, and their Redeemer; neither do you on the other hand ever separate Faith, Worship and Regard to God and Christ, from Righteousness and Sobriety, which yet many in all Ages have done, to the great Discredit of Religion: For, strictly speaking, Regards to God and Christ, make up your Religion; and the Regard to Righteousness and Sobriety, and whatever is fit in itself (without a particular Regard to God) makes Virtue; but as God commands these last, as well as the former, they are to be practised, because he commands them, and so doing, they are as much religious Acts as Prayer and Praise.—Tell me therefore what is it to be truly religious.

A. To have such an even Regard to Almighty God, as produces a constant Desire and Endeavour to please and obey him in all things.—

Q. What way have you of knowing what God commands you to believe and do, has he made known his Will to Men?

A. Yes, in the holy Scriptures.

Q. Is there any way beside the *holy Scriptures*?—

Q. What do you think of the *Reason* and *Conscience* God has given you?

Q. Don't you think he commands you to regard them, rather than your Passions and Inclinations?

Q. Which

Q. Which are the Ways therefore you have of knowing what God requires of you?

A. Scripture, Reason, and Conscience.—

Q. Should you not therefore be desirous that some Person would be at the pains to instruct you in what *Scripture*, *Reason*, and *Conscience*, require of you, that so you may the better please and obey God?

Q. And should you not attend with Pleasure, and *pray to God* that he will bless the Endeavours of such to make you wise and good? —

I shall begin to instruct you, by leading you on through the plainest Steps, till brought to discern Truths of the most exalted Nature.

Be humbly teachable, and you will find
Bright Scenes of Knowledge op'ning to your Mind.

*Excellence, Reasonableness, Advantage and
Obligation of Religion and Virtue.*

S E C T. II.

Excellence of Religion.

Q. Which is the more excellent Creature, a Beast or a Man?

Q. Which is the more excellent State, a State of Sleep and Inactivity, or of Wakefulness and Action?

Q. Which is the most excellent Employment of any Being, a low and mean Employment, or the noblest it is capable of?

6 RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

Q. Which is best, to be employed about Eating, Drinking and Playing, or in gaining Knowledge and doing Good?

Q. What is the more excellent Part of Man, his Soul or his Body?

Q. Which are the noblest Capacities of Man, his Senses, or his Understanding and Will?

Q. Which is the noblest Object he can employ his Mind on.—God and his Will, or what promotes Riches, Honour, and Pleasure?

Q. Is it not commendable and excellent to employ one's Understanding and Will in the best manner one can?

Q. What then is the noblest Exercise of a Man?—Is it to employ his noblest Faculties, Reason and Will on the noblest Objects, God and his Commandments, and this in the best manner he can?

Q. Can't you think of a more excellent way of living for a Man than this is?

Q. Will this improve his Understanding, better his Heart, and make him like to Christ, and pleasing to God?

Q. Is not he the most excellent Man, who is most like Christ, and most pleasing to God?

A. Yes, he's most excellent of all our Race
That most like Christ, best pleases God, thro' Grace.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

Thus, you may see that Religion is the best thing Men are capable of; for it is the
Em-

Employment of our noblest Powers, Understanding and Will, on the noblest Objects, God and his Will; and this in the best manner we are able to do.—You see therefore that Religion is not a mean and low Employment, but the noblest you are capable of.

S E C T. III.

Reasonableness of Religion.

Q. Since Religion is most excellent, is it not most reasonable that you should chuse and practise it before all other things?

Q. As God is the most excellent of all Beings, is it not most reasonable that you should esteem him most?

Q. Since God is the supreme Lord, and King of the World, and you are now under his Government, is it not reasonable you should obey him?

Q. As he is the best of all to you, having never ceased from doing you Good, both for Body and Soul, since he gave you Being, is it not reasonable you should most gratefully love him?

Q. Should you not love those who do you Good?

Q. Since all Happiness is in his Hand, and absolutely at his Disposal, is not endeavouring to please him the most reasonable thing in the World?

Q. Is

8th RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

Q. Is it not the greatest Folly to make him your Enemy, who alone can make you happy, and can make you exquisitely miserable?

Q. Since you are his Creature, and wholly live upon him, is it not reasonable you should live as he would have you do?

Q. Has not every Owner a Right to dispose of his own?

Q. Is it not as highly reasonable that you should love and obey God, as your Parent, your Master, or your Prince?

A. Yes.

To love and well obey the Holy One,
The highest Reason is, as all must own.

APPLICATION.

This Love and Obedience to God is Religion, and includes all right and virtuous Behaviour in it, from hence you may see what I am inviting you to is the most reasonable thing in the World.

SECT. IV.

Advantage of Religion.

Q. **D**On't you know that there are such things as Stocks, Pillories, Prisons, and Gibbets, who are they provided for?

Q. Are there any Laws to punish Men for being good?

Q. If

Q. If you forget God, are you not likely to run into Sin, and then become very wicked, and so very miserable *?

Q. Mayn't you, if you disregard God, become a Liar, a Swearer, a Thief, or even a Murderer, and so be infamous in Life, and at Death; and miserable to all Eternity?

Q. There are Thousands now in Prisons to be punished, how might they have escaped being there?

Q. If you would escape being there, is it not the sure way for you to fear God, and to obey him?

Thus, if you are good, you are not likely to suffer as a Criminal.—

Q. But don't you think a wicked Man feels a great deal of Uneasiness in himself, and is very fearful of Death?

Q. Have you never felt a Concern, when you have done wrong, perhaps been disobe-

* It may be very proper to inlarge on these Things, so as to convince the young Mind, that the want of Religion and Virtue is the ready way to the Stroke of Justice; the Progress of Vice from disregarding, to opposing Conscience, from neglecting of Prayer and reading the Scriptures, to breaking the Lord's-Day, Swearing, Drunkenness, Lewdness, &c. and the Degrees of Punishment, as the Stocks, House of Correction, &c. These Things familiarly represented, will greatly affect the Mind; and it may be proper to acquaint them, that Indictments often run in this Form, *Not having the Fear of God before their Eyes.*

dict

10 RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

dient to your Parents, or offended God some other way?

Q. Do you think a good Man finds Pain in his Mind, because he is good?

Q. Which of the two do you think God is a Friend to, the religious or the irreligious Man?

Q. Can a wicked Man rejoice in God as his Friend, or look Death in the Face without Fear?

Q. Or must he dread both as an Enemy?

Q. But what may the good Man do?

A. He may rejoice in God, and meet Death without Horror.

Q. Since Religion will keep you from Sin, and much temporal Punishment, and make you good, is not this a great Advantage?

Q. But, don't you also think that God will make a public Difference between the Righteous and the Wicked, between those who love and obey him, and those who do not?

Q. Won't the wise and righteous God, some time or other, reward the good Man greatly, and make him proportionably happy, as he has been humble and faithful?

Q. Where do you think he will thus reward the Righteous?

Q. Where do you think he will punish the Wicked?

A P P L I -

APPLICATION.

Thus, if you attend, you will see that Religion and Virtue will be greatly profitable now ; as, first, they will keep you from deserving and falling under public Punishment ; 2dly, from the feeling Pain of Mind, and Dread of God's Vengeance, and, at the same time, give you Peace and Joy in God ; and, what is still more, 3dly, be rewarded at last with the Happiness of Heaven. These Advantages you may depend upon, and 'tis likely God will also prosper you here, as well as hereafter.——

Q. What are the three special Advantages you may depend on, upon being truly religious ?

A. 1. Preservation from deserving public Punishments. 2. Deliverance from Distress of Soul, arising from Guilt, with an actual Enjoyment of Peace of Conscience. 3. Rewards in the heavenly World, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Religion guards from Guilt and public Shame,
Brings Joy, and Heaven thro' the Redeemer's Name.

S E C T. V.

Obligation to Religion.

Q. Ought you not to prefer what is most excellent, reasonable and advantageous ?

1

Q. And

12 RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

Q. And shan't you deserve to be punished, if you contemn it, and practise what is most base, unreasonable and hurtful?

Q. Can you think of any thing baser, than to despise and reject God, who is the best of all Beings, to whom you are so much obliged; and to love and practise Sin, which is, 1. the worst thing in itself; 2. most hateful to God; and, 3. most hurtful to yourself, and all the World about you?

Q. Ought you not to do what is most reasonable, and shan't you deserve to be punished if you do not?

Q. But Love and Obedience to God, is not only most excellent and reasonable, but strictly necessary; you are bound to do it, for God has so commanded.—Must you not do what God commands?

Q. Let me hear you give a Reason why you should not do as God commands you.—

Q. Are you not God's Creature?

Q. Is it not he who daily provides for you?

Q. Are you not under his Government; does not he rule in Heaven and Earth?

Q. Should you not submit to his Government, and obey his Laws?

Q. If you don't obey him, what are you, a wicked or a good Person?

Q. Should a good Parent make no Difference between wicked and good Children?

Q. Don't

Q. Don't you see and know, that every Child, Servant and Subject *ought to be, i. e.* is in Duty bound to be, *obedient*?

Q. What do you think ought to be done to them, if they are not?

Q. Since God is the most kind and bountiful Father, your Owner, and righteous Master, your supreme King and Governor, must you not either obey him, or else own in your Conscience, that you deserve to be punished?——

A. Yes, I'm constrain'd to own this.

Not to obey my Maker and my God
Merits the Strokes of his avenging Rod.

APPLICATION.

Think therefore, my young Friend, often of this thing, if I don't obey God, I must *condemn myself*. Remember it is your Duty therefore to be religious, and never forget what you have now owed to me, That to strive daily to do what God commands, is the most *excellent, reasonable, advantageous* and *necessary* thing in the World. If hereafter you refuse so to do, your Conscience shall own you deserve to be punished, and God will certainly give you what you deserve, if you reject his Grace to the last.

Ah! then you'll wish, in agonizing Pain,
'To have one *Day* one *Hour* of Grace again.

C H A P. II.

Some of the plainest Arguments for the Being and Providence of God.

P R O O F I.

God's Being and Attributes.

S E C T. I.

Arguments drawn from the Wisdom, Power and Goodness visible in the several Parts of the Creation.

Tutor. **H**ERE is a Watch *.—Look at it, my young Friend, attentively ;—consider how many and different the Parts are ;—what Contrivance there is in each ;—the Agreement of the Parts to each other ;—and the Union of the whole to answer a certain wise Purpose. Is not much Skill and Art requisite to make such an one ?

Q. Are not you sure that the several Parts were made and put together by some Person or other, of Understanding and Skill in this Work ?

* It seems proper to shew the Youth this or some Piece of Workmanship, that may gain his Attention, convince him of the Maker's Skill, and leave an Impression on his Imagination.

Q. Thus,

Q. Thus, if you look on a Cabinet, or a House, don't the plain Marks of the Workman's Skill appear? and must you not conclude, that the one and the other was the Effect of the Power and Skill of a wise and skilful Maker?

Q. Will it not always be reasonable to conclude from equal, and especially from more Marks of Wisdom and Power, that it is the Workmanship of a skilful Artist?

Q. Thus, if you must conclude that an Horn-Book was made with Art and Skill, because it has Marks of it; you have more Reason to conclude that this Book was so, because the Marks of Skill are more in Number, and greater in Kind. Now, the more curious, complicated, and difficult the Work, so much the more Evidence there will be for this Truth.—*The Maker of this was a wise and powerful Being.* And if the Performance involves in it a Discovery of Beneficence, and tends to promote Happiness, then in proportion as it does, so it proves that the Being is beneficent and good.

Q. When therefore you see the Earth covered with Grass, (each Blade of which is a curious Piece of Work) when you look on Flowers *, Trees, &c. all which are Bodies wonderfully contrived, (as a Philosopher can easily inform you, and your own Eyes wit-

* For charming Entertainment and moral Instruction, see *Reflections on a Flower Garden.*

ness) should you not look upon them as several Pieces of Work made by a most skilful Artist?

Q. When you see Fishes glide through the Water, or Birds skim through the Air; or Insects, and Beasts feeding and sporting, what should you think of them?—

Q. What should you conclude from the amazing Skill, Power and Goodness shewn in their Formation?—

Q. Should you not conclude, that there is a Being of unsearchable Knowledge, Power and Goodness, who made them?

Q. When you are considering other things, should you forget to take notice of yourself?

Q. When you consider your Body in its several Parts, don't you see in each a wonderful Contrivance?

Q. If I was to shew you a curious Image of a Man, would you not admire it, and praise the Statuary?

Q. What then should you do, when you have Eyes that can see, Ears that can hear, Hands so wonderfully made, both for Service and Beauty, should you not be fully persuaded that you are the Work of a wise, powerful and good Being?

Q. Should you not admire his Skill, stand in awe of his Power, and learn to trust in it; and love his Goodness, and be won by it to chearful Obedience?

A. Most certainly I ought.

Tutor.

Tutor. You do right in admiring the Contrivance and Skill of a Statuary, and a Watch-maker ; but there is not one Member of your Body, but has more Skill in it than all these put together.—Every single Bone in your Body (of which you have not fewer than 284) has, as the Learned will inform you *, above forty Designs or Intentions answered in it ; so that there are about 11644 Displays of Contrivance and Skill in your Bones.—But none can tell what the Amount is, when the Skin, Muscles, Ligaments, Vessels, Glandules, Humours, and what is much more wonderful than any of these separately taken, the Variety and Multitude of Designs in their Situation, &c. in every Member made up of these several Parts.—Here we are lost, the Ends are so many, and the Wisdom is exquisite and infinite.—

Q. What then should the Consideration of yourself lead you to conclude ?

A. That I am the Work of a most wise, powerful and good Being.

Q. Are not therefore the Fruits of the Earth, Grass, Corn, Herbs and Trees ; Fishes, Birds, Insects, Reptiles, Beasts and Men ; are not all these to be regarded as so many Pieces of divine Art, and the Operation of God's Hand ?

* See *Wilkins's Nat. Relig.* L. 1. c. 6.

Q. Don't these shew you, that there is a powerful, wise and good Being, who made you and all these Things?

Q. For is there not in each of these not only as many and clear, but incomparably more and brighter Marks of wise Contrivance, and powerful Execution, than in this Watch *?

Q. Must you not therefore as (nay, if possible, more) firmly believe that these Things are the Works of a wise and powerful Being, as that a Watch is made by a Workman?

Q. Suppose you look above to the Heavens, and there observe the Clouds swimming in the Air, at proper time to water

* It would be a very proper way to convince the Learner of the vast Difference between the Works of God, and the Works of the greatest Artists, to shew him some of them through a Microscope; by which means, as the excellent Bishop *Wilkins* observes, "The former would appear adorned with all imaginable Elegance and Beauty, whilst the most curious Works of Men will appear rude and bungling, the finest sharpest Needle appears as blunt as a Bar of Iron, and the most accurate Engravings seem as if they had been done with a Mattock or a Trowel."—*Wilk. Nat. Rel. L. 1. c. 6.*—I should earnestly recommend it to Parents and Masters who can do it, to take this Method of convincing their Children of the Excellence of the Works of God; it may have many good Effects, and may bring them to delight in searching out the Wisdom and Goodness contained in them, prevent Idleness, teach Humility, possess the Mind with admiring Thoughts, and fill it with an habitual Reverence of the great Creator.

the Earth, the Sun *, Moon and Stars moving variously ; and then consider, among other things, that by the regular Motions of the Sun, Day and Night, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter are made, should you not be convinced of, and admire the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of the great Maker and Preserver of all these Things ?

Q. What do the Heavens declare to you ?——

A. The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-Work.

Q. Don't you observe many of those vast Bodies describe great Circles ? Can you sling a Stone up into the Air, and make it describe a Circle ?——Try what you can do.——You'll find, that before you can make it move round about, as you find the Moon does round the Earth, you must use Art with it, as putting it into a Sling, then must give it a due Degree of Motion, and hold it from flying away, &c.——Oh ! regard that wise and mighty Being, who not only made Sun, Moon, Planets, &c. but placed them as in different Slings, gave them their several Motions, and has and does keep them, by his Almighty Arm, from flying out of

* It matters not whether we speak philosophically or no.

their Orbs *.—Thus, whether you consider the Things which are in the Waters, on the Earth, or in the Heavens, whether you consider yourself or other Things, you must, if you will judge by your Reason, conclude that all these are made by one, who is *wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in Working* †. They are so many Pieces of Work, his Compositions and Effects; and therefore we must regard the Architect, Composer, and Cause, who has Power and Skill equal to all these, and who do you think that is?

A. God Almighty. —

APPLICATION.

Attend often to the Works of Creation, and let all the Skill, Power and Goodness, which you discern in the several Things which God has made, fill you with Admiration, Love, Trust, and holy Fear. Endeavour to possess your Mind with a continual Regard to him, by reading his Power, Wisdom and Beneficence, as enstamped on all his Works ‡.

Dive thro' the Deep, and search the World around;
Scale Heav'n's high Arch; in all his Praise is found.

* The full Application of this Example may be seen in a valuable Book, not long since published, intitled, *Matbo.*

† *Iſaiab* xxviii. 29.

‡ Read *Ray* on the Creation.—*Derham's* Physico-Theology.—Religious Philosopher, &c.—*Spectacle de la Nature*; or, Nature display'd.—Meditations on the Stary Heaven.—And *Dr. Cotton Mather's* Christian Philosopher, a Book highly to be esteemed.

P R O O F

P R O O F • II.

From the Relation and Subservience of the several Parts, to the Preservation and Benefit of the whole.

S E C T. II.

Tutor. **I**F every Part of the Creation, taken separately, convinces you that it was made by a powerful, wise and good Being, what do you think of Things, as they are related to each other, and so make up a vast and beautiful System?

Pupil. A. The Argument is hereby stronger, in Proof that there is a God infinite in Power, Wisdom and Goodness.

Q. What would have become of Animals, if the Earth had not been covered with Grass, Herbs and Trees, but had been all bare Clay and Gravel?

Q. Or what if it had been covered with Grass, Herbs, &c. at first, but there were no Seeds lodged in them for their Preservation and Increase?

Q. Or if there had been Grass, Herbs, &c. which contained their own Seed, what would it have signified, if there had been no Clouds to water the Earth? or what if there was Rain, but no Sun?

Q. What if the Earth was as richly furnished, as it is now, but Men and Beasts had

22 RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

had no Appetites;—or Appetites, but no Mouths;—or Mouths, but no Stomachs?—

Wise and understanding Men not only see a Wisdom in every Part of God's Work taken by itself, but in all his Works taken together, and making up a Whole, and as plain as you discern a Design not only in every Letter of this Book, but in all the Letters so put together as to form Words, Sentences, Paragraphs; in each of which you find a separate Sense, and a Sense arising from all.

Q. Does not composing a wise and good Book give greater Evidence of the Wisdom and Power of the Maker, than writing an Alphabet, or two or three Sentences?

APPLICATION.

Look, my young Friend, upon the whole Creation as a Book, and attend more and more to the several Parts of it, and their Relation to one another; and they will be like so many Words, and Sentences, that go to express the complete Sense of the Author. —You may discern an amazing Gradation from the finest Moss to the stateliest Tree; and from a Coccle or Oyster *, up to Man, the Top of the inferior Creation, and 'tis likely

* The *Polypus*, which has of late so much entertained and surprized the inquisitive Philosopher, might perhaps have been mentioned as that which is the Nexus between the vegetable and animal World; but the Youth being a Stranger to this wonderful Creature,
it

likely there is, could we discern it, to the highest Archangel. And beside the Wisdom and Power displayed in each, what a Stretch of Understanding do we see there was in making so vast a System of such various, and almost infinite Parts, each contributing to the Order, Beauty, Use, and Perfection of the whole. Assist your Thoughts on this Subject, by considering how much more clearly the Wisdom, &c. is seen, when all the Parts of a Machine are put together, and you discern their Relation and Subservience to each other, than when you only see a Part by itself.—Or fancy yourself in a *noble and well-ordered Family*; or viewing an Army under March; or, if you can, get a View of an Orrery.—By these means you'll be better able to see the Force of this Argument. For,

Q. Must not he be amazingly wise, powerful and good, who has taken so many thousand Steps, each of which (beside what there is of Wisdom in it taken by itself) is designed to form an excellent Whole?—

Q. What should you learn from such a View of the Creation as this?—

Q. Should you not, are you not forced to conclude, that there is a most wise, powerful and good God, whose you, and all Things are?—

it is only humbly proposed to the Consideration of the Curious, whether it be not the Link that unites Vegetation and sensitive Life.

Q. How

24 RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

Q. How should you behave towards such a Being?—

A. With the profoundest Reverence, and Submission, highest Love, steadiest Trust, and most cheerful Obedience.

Who would not fear this mighty matchless Lord!
Bow to his Will, and live upon his Word?

*Proofs of God's Providence, from whence also
may be inferred his Being and Perfections.*

S E C T. III.

1. From the Preservation and Order of the World.

Tutor. **D**ON'T you observe there is a regular Return of Day and Night, Summer and Winter, that Things go on in general in a very orderly manner? The Husbandman, and the Gardener, knows what he has to do in each Season, and all Persons have, in their several Employments, Evidence enough to act upon, so that Business is transacted by Sea and Land upon Supposition, that there is a settled Order that will continue.—Now, must not such an Order and Settlement arise from some Being, who has so ordered and settled Things?—Were you to come to a great House, and observe the regular Returns of Morning and Evening Devotion, of Provision made for three Meals every Day; of the particular Place and Business of every Servant, &c. what should you conclude from it?—

Q. Should

Q. Should you not be certain there was a Governor in that Family, and that all this Regularity was the Result of his Management, or of some employed by him?— Oh! consider all this World as the House and Family of God! Consider the general Order settled as his general Government. Thus Seed-Time and Harvest, Creatures proportioned to Food, and Food to Creatures; the World never so overstocked as to have all Provisions consumed, nor any Species so much multiplied, as to have overborne and destroyed all others, nor any so lessened (that we know of) as to be extinguished; Herbs, Trees, &c. have not been lost for want of Seed, nor a Race of Animals failed for the want of Males and Females.—No; there is such due Provision and Adjustment made in this great Family, that Things are provided for in a most wonderful, and unsearchably wise manner.—To whom shall we refer all this, to the Creatures themselves? Do you think it owing to their Forethought and Contrivance?

A. No, they could not think before they were.——

Q. Is Man the Orderer of this?

Q. Who is it then?—You answer right.

Always remember this World may be resembled to a great House or Family, wherein Millions of Millions of Creatures (each with his Wants) are to be provided for, and governed according to their Natures, and never

forget the proper Inference: Think with yourself, I see they are thus provided for, therefore——what?

A. There must be a wise and beneficent Provider.——

Q. They are ordered and kept in their Places, and due Subordination, therefore——what?

A. There must be an Orderer and Governor, who has a perfect Knowledge of, and Power over them all.

APPLICATION.

Thus from a Consideration of the Preservation, Maintenance and Order of the World around us, you must conclude, that there is a Preserver, Maintainer and Orderer; and consequently that he is most wise, mighty and kind.——But I would lead you particularly to consider what Care he has taken of Men and their Affairs.

2. From the Nature and State of Man.

Tutor. Don't you find you have Appetites and Passions, which are very strong?

Q. Don't you find Reason and Understanding, by which you can judge whether you ought to please those Appetites, and how far you may lawfully do it?

Q. Don't you find a Will, by which you have some degree of Liberty to determine to do either, as your Passions, or your Reason require?

Q. Don't

Q. Don't you see you will be commendable or blame-worthy, according as your Will determines either for what is reasonable or unreasonable?

Thus in our very Nature are the plainest Tokens, that the glorious Creator designed us to be under Government; for he has made Men capable of being governed in a moral and religious way, by rational and religious Motives and Arguments, and so distinguished them from the Brutes.

Q. Are you not in such Circumstances, as try you whether you will comply with Appetites or Reason, and with the Will of God, or Inclinations to Evil?

Q. Are not you often tempted by an Inclination for Pleasure to do what Reason, Conscience, and the Word of God, tell you ought not to be done?

So that we see you are capable of being governed, and are actually on Trial, and have already deserved Praise or Dispraise.

Q. Don't you think that he, who made you thus, and placed you thus, takes notice how you behave?

Q. Don't you find that Pleasure is an Incitement to Action, and Pain a Discouragement from it?

Q. Have you never found Pleasure or Pain any where but in your Senses?

Q. Have you never had your Mind and Conscience approving, and making
D 2 you

you joyful, when you have done your Duty?

Q. Have you never had your Mind sad, uneasy and sorrowful, when you have done wickedly?

Q. Have you any Notion what it is to have the Joy and Pleasure of a good Conscience?

Q. Have you any Notion what the Pain and Evil is of a bad Conscience?

Q. Which is the best and most rational Pleasure, that of the Mind and Conscience, or the Body and Senses?

Q. Which Pain ought we to chuse, if we must have one?

Q. Are not the Pleasures and Pains both of the Body and Mind Motives, that should, and will influence Men in their Temper and Practice?

Q. But are not Men so contrived in their very Nature, that they shall be under the strongest Excitements to preserve and cherish their Life?—

Q. Will Self-Love, or Hunger, Thirst, &c. suffer you to take no care at all of yourself, and let you die without any Pain?

Q. Nay, is not Pain, or some present Evil, annexed to what will be hereafter hurtful in any great degree, *e. g.* too much Abstinence, and too much Indulgence, too much Heat, and too much Cold, &c?

Q. And

Q. And as to the Mind, is not Fear, Remorse, and the Stings of Conscience connected to Sin and Wickedness?

Q. And Hope in God, Self-Approbation, and a joyful Conscience connected to a religious and virtuous Life?

Q. Is not Government among Men the Appointment of God, Kings, Judges, &c. are they not raised up to restrain, and punish Wickedness, and countenance Religion and Honesty?

Q. What do you think may be fairly concluded from all this?

A. That the all-wise *Creator* has made special Provision for Man's Preservation and Benefit, and right moral Conduct.——

Q. Do not those things put together shew, that Men are the Subjects of a wise and good Being, who has made such Connections, and is hereby rewarding or punishing them in some sort at present, (though not fully) in the natural and ordinary way *?

This is in general the Case, as the Experience of the best and worst of Men do prove. And the sober Judgment of all Men will avouch this to be true, that the *truest* and *most durable* Happiness of Body and Soul will be found in that way, which most enobles and perfects their Natures.——

* See *Butler's Analogy*, P. 1. c. 1, 3.

3. Facts and Experience.

But there is not only this Provision in the Nature and Circumstances of every Man, by which it appears that his Maker has provided both for the Happiness of his Body and Soul, by the Laws of his very Being; but there is more than this to be considered, even the Experience the World has ever had of a wise and just Providence, countenancing Honesty and Virtue, and discountenancing the contrary; so that there has been no Age, wherein Men have not observed a Blessing ordinarily attending on the Religious and Virtuous, and a Curse frequently on Persons of the opposite Character. —

Q. What do you think may be inferred from this general Experience of Mankind?—

Q. Does it not speak that there is a Being, who observes Men, and secretly influences and orders their Affairs?

Q. Does it not lead us necessarily to infer what he loves, and what he hates?—

Q. What does that Being discover himself to love, who encourages and promotes Goodness and Virtue, and discourages the contrary *? —

A. He shews that he loves Goodness, and hates Sin and Vice.

* For a short Description of the Nature and Attributes of God to the Capacity of Youth, consult *Bourn's Lectures*, 3d Catech. sect. 3.

But

Tutor. But what has been perhaps more evident and remarkable than this, (and of which you may be satisfied by a thousand Instances drawn from universal History of all Ages and Nations) special Providences for the punishing some notorious and obstinate Sinners, whereby their Punishment has been as signal as their Crimes.

Q. Do not such Events point out to a wise and just Governor, as much as seeing a Parricide hanged in Chains does to a Law Judge, and Executioner?

Q. Does it not afford Reason to conclude that Wickedness is his Abhorrence?

And this is further shewn by the many visible Appearances in behalf of extraordinarily pious and virtuous Men, in granting them public Deliverances in answer to their Prayers.——

Q. Have not these Events shewn a wise and merciful Governor, taking care of human Affairs, as plainly as delivering the Helpless out of the Hand of his Oppressor shews the Interposing of a Deliverer?——

Q. Does not this give Cause to conclude, that this Being takes pleasure in Righteousness and Goodness?

Q. What would you call a Being, that abhors Wickedness, and takes pleasure in Goodness and Righteousness?

A. He is a righteous and good Being.

From

From Vice remov'd, to Goodness full inclin'd,
Are certain Strictures of a god-like Mind.

APPLICATION.

Thus you are gradually led to see an amazing Care and Providence exercised about Men and their Affairs, and this must be the Care of some wise, powerful Being, and who do you think this can be but God?

God has, in your Nature, exercised a Providence, putting you under certain Laws, which tend to the Preservation and best Condition, both of Soul and Body. And his Providence is also shewn (as the common Experience of Mankind attests) by his secret Blessing attending on truly religious and good Men, and his Curse on the Wicked. And what is a more public Evidence of this, many thousand Instances of remarkable Providences in their Favour; and for the Disgrace of Irreligion and Vice, and Punishment of the Wicked *.

* The Instructor should inform the Youth of remarkable Instances of these kinds, a great Plenty of which the Bible will afford him, (read the the whole Second Book of *Chronicles*;) many are marked out in the first Appendix to this Work. And it may be very useful to make young Persons well acquainted with all well attested Accounts of this kind. See God's Revenge against Murder, &c. And in general Biography, or the History of the Lives of particular Men. A good Collection of these put into the Hands of young Persons, might have an happy Influence on their Faith and Practice; particularly *Clarke's* Collection.

2. From

Q. From all which what should you conclude?—

A. That there is a wise, powerful and righteous God, who governs Men and their Affairs.—

Most wise, most mighty, merciful and just;
The Sinner's Terror, and the good Man's Trust.

Never forget this, God is not only wise and powerful, (as all his Works shew from the lowest to the highest) but he rules over all his Works, and is a *righteous* Ruler. Truth and Goodness are *his Delight*; Sin of all kinds are his *Abhorrence*; good Men he favours, and will bless; but the Wicked, sooner or later, he will most severely punish.

— The holy Scriptures display these Truths in the brightest manner.— And yet further than all this, you may, my young Friend, have an actual Experience of this Truth, that God governs in the World.

Q. Arn't you desirous to experience his Blessing?—

Tutor. I fear you have not prayed humbly and earnestly to him, to make you wise and good, or else, young as you are, I dare appeal to your own Experience that you have had an Answer of Prayer, that has convinced you of this Truth?—

4. From sensible Experience that every one may have.

Q. Don't you know that religious and good Men pray much and often to God?

Q. Nay,

34 RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

Q. Nay, that the worst of Men do so, when they are in great Affliction?

Q. What should you infer from hence?—

Q. Should you not conclude that good Men find it useful, and bad Men hope at least that it will prove so?

Do but make the Trial, pray earnestly to God, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, to give you Strength against those Temptations, which commonly draw you into Sin, and you'll find that your Endeavours will then become successful; all religious Men can tell you, that there is a God, who hears and answers Prayer abundantly. I might go on, and add many other Things to help you to discern the Being and Perfections of God, as, 1st, that the Reason and Conscience, which are in Men, oblige them to own that there is a God, on whom they depend, and that he is holy and good. 2dly, And that all Nations in all Ages of the World have acknowledged these Truths, and some way or other have expressed their Belief by Prayer, and public Worship, tho' it must be owned Ignorance and Superstition have caused the grossest Blunders therein. —I could shew you, 3dly, how the wisest and best Men have argued and practised in regard to these Truths. —I could heap up Arguments, 4thly, from this World's having had a Beginning not a great many thousand Years ago, for which there are as fair and con-

convincing Proofs of several kinds, as the Nature of the Thing is well capable of *.—
 5thly, From abundance of Miracles in confirmation of the Truth of the Jewish and Christian Religion.—I might advance,
 6thly, to—metaphysical and demonstrative Proofs, which would convince you, that there must, and could not but have been a wise and powerful Agent from all Eternity †.
 —It might be further shewn, 7thly, that in a Series of Beings, where the Existence of one thing depends upon another, and this upon a third, and so on, there must be some independent Being, on whom the Series originally depends ‡.—To these more might be still added, but some of these are above your Capacity, and though they yield the strongest Demonstration to many wise and learned Men, yet, for want of better Understanding and Acquaintance with these Arguments, they would perhaps only confound you; I shall therefore be satisfied with having pointed out some plain, but important Matters, which should assist and establish your Belief in God, and his wise and righteous Providence ||.

* See *Wilkins*, Nat. Relig. L. 1. c. 5.

† *Locke*, Hum. Underst. L. 4. c. 10.

‡ Relig. of Nat. sect. 5.

|| *Abernethy's* excellent Discourses concerning the Being and natural and moral Perfections of God, ought to be carefully read.

C H A P. III.

Of the Difference between moral Good and Evil, and the Certainty of a future State of Rewards and Punishments.

S E C T. I.

Of the Difference between moral Good and Evil.

Tutor. **A**S I have laid before you some Proofs (best suited to your Capacity) of the Being, Perfections and Providence of God, I shall now endeavour to help you to discern the absolute Difference there is between Actions, which are called *Good* and *Evil*, that the former are of themselves considered *reasonable*, and *fit* for every intelligent Being to practise, the other *unreasonable*, and for ever *unfit* to be done.— This will convince you of your Obligation to avoid what is wicked, and do what is righteous, from the very Nature of Things, as well as from the Will of God, and, at the same time, shew you how altogether wise, righteous and necessary his Laws are, and how holy and excellent a Ruler the Lord *Jehovah* is.

The Actions of reasonable Creatures are *morally good or evil*, according as they are, or are not conformable to Truth and

Fitness:—Thus if you are required to go to any Place, or perform any Action, and promise so to do, the doing so (if it was right to promise) is a moral good Action; for it is acting according to Truth; the not doing it would have been acting a Lye, and going in your Practice contrary to your Profession.—This Instance is so plain, you must see the Evidence of it; but it would be easy to shew, that there is, with regard to certain Actions, (*e. g.* governing our Appetites and Passions, doing Charity to the Poor, Justice to all Persons, and paying Worship and Obedience to God) this Proposition: *This is right to be done—As a reasonable Creature, I own I should do this or that.*—Now, in all these Cases, the acting so, is doing as Reason requires, is acting according to Truth, or Fitness, which is right, and so is morally good. And on the other hand, there are other Actions (*e. g.* gratifying Passions, and Appetites unreasonably, Cruelty to the Miserable, Injustice between Man and Man, Irreligion towards God) to which this Proposition belongs; *This is wrong to be done; This ought not to be done; This is unreasonable to be performed.*—And therefore the doing any of these (or designing them in the Heart) is contrary to Truth, contrary to what is known to be fit and reasonable, and this must be wrong for a reasonable Creature to do, and so it be-

comes moral Evil or Wickedness.—All this you'll see plainer by Examples, than any Words can express.

Q. If a Being gives Being, and all sorts of Enjoyments to another, should he not be thanked for his Goodness? Is not this a Truth in this Case, the Creature should praise the Creator?—And if this Creature gives the Creator no Thanks, does he not in Practice deny the Truth, act unfitly, and against all Reason?

Q. What kind of Behaviour would this be?

A. This Behaviour is morally evil.

You may easily see the moral Good there is in all Acts of Justice, Truth, Faithfulness, Mercy, and the moral Evil in Injustice, Falshood, Breach of Agreements, Cruelty, &c. and no less the Fitness in Sobriety, Purity, Meekness, Humility, Spirituality, and Heavenly-mindedness, and the Unfitness or Immorality in Drunkenness, Gluttony, Fornication, furious Anger, Pride, Sensuality, &c. These Things differ one from the other, and are opposite in their Nature and Consequences *, as *Darkness* and *Light*, *Sweet* and *Bitter*; and therefore the one Sort is to be chosen, when the other is rejected, and your own Reason and Conscience shews

* See *Balguy's Tracts*.—See also *Hutchenson* on the Passions, Treatise the 2d.—And *Burnet's Letters*, &c.

what is right, and fit to be chosen, and what to be rejected, so far as it is unprejudiced, and not blinded by Passion, or overborne by corrupt Inclinations, which, since the Fall and Apostacy of our first Parents, is more or less the Case even with the best of Men, as Experience universally demonstrates.

Q. Don't you see from hence, that there is a Right and a Wrong, a Reasonableness and Unreasonableness, a Fitness and Unfitness in Actions?

Q. If reasonable Creatures act against what is reasonable, don't they do wrong? Don't they deserve to be blamed?

Q. Is it not fit that they should be treated as unreasonable Persons? — And, on the other hand, if Persons of Understanding and Reason act according to their best Judgment, don't they do right? Don't they deserve to be praised? — And is it not fit that they should be treated as reasonable Persons? — If you have attended closely to what has now been said, you have seen that some Actions (or Designs to act) are in themselves good or bad, right or wrong, whether they be commanded by a Superior or not. —

Q. Suppose that you had never heard that God had forbid to do a Person evil, who had done you good, yet should you not see that you did wrong and wickedly in so doing? —

Q. Though you had never heard that God commanded us to help the Distressed, should you not see that it was right and good to do it?—

Thus I might put Questions through all the several Duties of Piety towards God—Righteousness and Charity towards Men—and Sobriety in ourselves, and you would be forced to own the Difference between Piety and Impiety, Righteousness and Unrighteousness, &c. and that the one Sort were fit, reasonable and right, and therefore good to be chosen and done, and the others not so. And hereupon, if the Question was put on which Side Praise and Blame, Reward and Punishment were due, you could easily give an Answer.

Q. Can any Person, without the most notorious Opposition to what is righteous and good, blame and punish a Person for chusing and acting according to what is upon the whole reasonable and right; and praise and reward him for chusing and acting what is unreasonable and wrong?

A. No; this would discover the greatest Depravity of Nature in any one who did so.

APPLICATION.

Always remember this, that Morality and Virtue are the most certain and unalterable Things in the World; that Virtue consists
in

in conforming your Will to what Reason and Fitness require, and Vice in not doing so.

—Remember God has made you not only capable of acting, but of discerning much of what is reasonable to do, and has formed us with Instincts and Affections, which (if not depraved) excite to Virtue, and moreover a Conscience, which will approve or condemn, as your Choice or Conduct is *right* or *wrong*.—Hence you may see of how great Importance it is, to consult your Understanding and Reason, and practise according to what appears from thence right.——

Q. Are we not sure that God would have us act reasonably?

Q. Can you think that God, at any time, does what is unfit?

Q. Or would he have us do so? How therefore must you act, if you would please him?

A. I must do what is fit and reasonable to be done, as far as in me lies, in all my Actions.

Q. Upon the whole, are you not sure that it is God's Will that you should do what is good and right, and fit to do?—And are not you as certain, that it is God's Will we should not do what is bad, wrong and unfit?——

Hence we may discern, that it is the Will, Law and Command of God to rea-

sonable Creatures that they act reasonably ; and therefore Virtue is to be regarded not only as what is fit in itself, but as the Will of God ; and when we act reasonably, from a Regard to the Will of God requiring so to do, our Actions are not only virtuous, but religious Actions also ; and so it may be said with the Poet of one thus acting :

“ An *honest Man*, the noblest Work of God.”

S E C T. II.

Concerning a future State of Rewards and Punishments.

Tutor. I Have shewn you that some Actions are reasonable, and others unreasonable, considered in themselves, and that a reasonable Creature should certainly act reasonably, both because it is reasonable, and the Will of God. I shall next shew what will become of such a Being as Man after Death. —

1. Presumption from the different Nature of the Soul and Body.

Q. Don't you experience that the Mind or Soul is an active Being, always exercising itself?

Q. Is not your Body considered in itself of the same Nature as the Matter you see about you, suppose this Book, or

that Chair?

Q. Must you not conclude, that the Soul is another sort of Being from your Body?

Always

Always remember that; and although you can't apprehend as yet the Force of the Arguments brought from Reason, to prove the Immateriality and Immortality of the Soul, and that it will (unless one suppose the Power of God, purposely employed to annihilate it) remain the same active thinking Being after the Body is dead, that it was before,——yet take notice there are many strong Proofs offered, which you may hereafter consider *.

——But at present observe, that your Mind is another and nobler sort of Being than your Body, and that it is from thence Virtue and Religion take their Rise, which may easily lead you to suppose, that the noble Being, which was an Inhabitant in the Body, remains the same, though at Death the House be pulled down; and that the Soul, which was here religious and virtuous, shall for ever be so, and be hereafter prosperous and happy; and the irreligious and vicious for ever so, and miserable and accursed on that account.

2. Ask your own Conscience whether it does not appear fit and righteous, that virtuous and good Men, who love God and

2. It is righteous that there be a public Di-

* See *Grove's Immateriality*. — *Baxter's Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*. — And Appendix to *Cumberland's Treatise of the L. of Nature*, containing a Summary of the Controversy between Dr. *Clarke*, &c.

keep

distinction
made be-
tween the
Wicked and
Good.

keep his Commandments, should
be more happy than wicked
Men? And are not you sure
God will act what is most fit
and righteous?

Q. Is it not reasonable to expect that
those, who do their best to fear God, and
please him in all things, will be differently
treated by him from those, who are wilfully
profane and disobedient?

Q. Would a wise and righteous Parent
or Master, treat bad and good Children or
Servants alike? Now, as you are sure God
is most wise and righteous, how do you con-
clude he will deal with religious and good
Men?

A. Doubtless he will publicly shew his
Approbation of them, and make them happy
in proportion as they are pleasing to him.

Q. And how, may we reasonably con-
clude, he will deal with vicious and ungodly
Men?

A. Certainly he will openly discover his
Displeasure against such, and make them
as miserable as they make themselves sinful;
for this is but what is right to be done.

This will display his Nature and his Name,
To exalt the Just, and sink the Vile in Shame.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

But God does not in common make such
open Discoveries of his Approbation and
Dis-

Disapprobation in this World, therefore you may be sure there is another State in which the Good and Bad are to be openly dealt with, according as their Works have been; of which we shall see more said presently.

Q. Further, are not you sure God loves Righteousness and Goodness, and all those who are righteous and good?

3. From God's Love of Righteousness, &c.

Q. Must not those Persons be very pleasing to God, who strive against the Corruptions of their Nature, and the Temptations of the World, to do whatever is right, and delight to keep his Commandments?

Q. Is it not as certain, that God abhors all Wickedness, as that he loves Righteousness?

Q. Must not wicked Men therefore, who delight in what is odious to God, be displeasing to him?

Q. Are not you convinced therefore, from God's righteous Nature and Government,—and his Love of Goodness,—and Abhorrence of Wickedness, that he will make, some time or other, a visible Difference between good and bad Men?

A. Yes; I'm forced to think so, or think unworthily of God.

He'll shew his Love of Truth in open Sight,
The Judge of all the Earth will sure do right.

APPLICATION.

Thus, from the Light of Reason, you may conclude that, under the Government of a wise, righteous and holy God, *good Men* shall be signally rewarded, and *bad Men* signally punished. God will, as his Government is public and universal, give a general and public Proof of his Regard to, and Love of Truth and Righteousness, and his Opposition to, and Detestation of the contrary.

4. From this Distinction not being made in this World.

Q. Does God make this public Difference at present? —

Are all virtuous and good Men openly rewarded in this World, and the wicked openly punish'd?

— No: God does not in this World make the Distinction; instead of it he sometimes permits some of the vilest Persons on Earth to prosper and flourish, by means of their Villainy, whilst, at the same time, some of the most upright and virtuous Men are, in Body, Name and Circumstances, very wretched, merely, as to all Appearance, for their Love to God, and their Integrity and Virtue. —

Q. May you not gather from hence, that there is a State of Life after this, into which the Souls of good and bad Men pass? —

Q. How will it be with each of them in that State? —

A. Ex-

A. Exceeding happy or miserable ; for,
at present,

Felicitating Joys, unmix'd are sown,
For godly Men ; for Sinners, Woes unknown.

APPLICATION.

There God will make the full Distinction between the Vile and Precious. The Persons, who bear some Resemblance to his moral Perfections, and those who have none ; those whom he loves, and those whom he hates. O attend to this, and improve it for your Soul's Sake !

Q. Do you conclude therefore, that he will, another Day, openly and fully reward the Obedience of the Righteous, and punish the Wickedness of the Wicked? —

A. Yes : I conclude this as certainly as that he is the righteous Governor of the World.

You may be strengthened in the Belief of this, by considering that God does actually afford many *secret* Rewards to Virtue, and Punishments to Vice, at present.—That he hath so formed Man's Nature, that he can't help passing a Judgment on his own Designs and Actions ; such as are truly religious and good, he approves and applauds himself for ; such as are base and wicked, he condemns himself for : For the former, he has good Hopes and Expectations ; for the latter, Fear and Dread of Evil to come : So that
good

Several other
Reasons.

good and bad Men naturally forebode a happy Consequence will follow a religious Life, and a miserable End an irreligious and wicked one.

Q. Can you think God would have caused Men to have judged thus, if he had not designed to have executed accordingly?—

To add no more, he has afforded many remarkable Appearances, in the Course of his Providence through every Age, to support the Credit of Religion and Virtue, and discountenance the contrary. All these Things laid together, will afford you abundant Reason to be satisfied, that every sincerely virtuous and good Man will be publicly rewarded by God, and every perseveringly wicked Person as remarkably punished. And that since this is not done in this State of Things, therefore there is a State of Rewards and Punishments in the *next Life*, where it will be be most exactly done *.

APPLICATION.

Thus, from Reason, it may be gathered, that you are to live in another World, and that it will be in Misery or Happiness, in Heaven or Hell, according as you have, or have not sincerely feared God, and kept his Commandments in this Life.—O let it a-

* See *Baxter's Reason of the Christian Religion*, P. 1. c. 14. and *Clarke's Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion*, Prop. 3, 4. p. 249.

waken you to Prayer and Pains, that you perish not! All this, which *Reason* leads you to judge, the Revelation made by our Lord Jesus Christ most positively declares, and most evidently displays all the divine Perfections in the Method of pardoning Sin, and saving the Soul. Upon the whole, you have had the Proofs of the Being and Providence of God; the Difference between moral Good and Evil; and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, laid before you, as they may be drawn from the bare Light of Nature. But you will see all this, and much more, most clearly revealed by Christian Religion, to which we shall next proceed, and must say of the divine Author, in the Words of *Milton*:

- “ I see thou know’st what is of use to know,
- “ What best to say canst say, to do canst do:
- “ Thy Actions to thy Words accord, thy Words
- “ To thy large Heart give Utterance due; thy Heart
- “ Contains of good, wise, just the perfect Shape.
- “ Should Kings and Nations, from thy Mouth consult
- “ Thy Counsel would be as the Oracle
- “ *Urim and Thummim*.”

Milt. Parad. reg. B. III.

C H A P. IV.

Arguments in Proof of the Truth of Christian Religion.

1. *Antecedent.* 2. *Concomitant.* 3. *Inherent.*
4. *Subsequent.*

1. *Antecedent Proofs.*

S E C T. I.

Presumptive Arguments from the State the World was in before Christ came ; — and the general Nature of his Religion.

Tutor. **Y**OU have been shewn what an excellent, reasonable, advantageous and necessary Thing Religion is ; and some easy Proofs of the Being, Perfections and Providence of God ; the Difference between moral Good and Evil ; and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, have been laid before you. I shall now point out some of the many Arguments, by which Christian Religion is shewn to be God's own Institution ; — and they will be ranged under these four general Heads ; *Antecedent, Concomitant, Inherent and Subsequent.*

Q. Is there any Knowledge more important, than of the Will of God concerning our Faith, Worship and Practice ?

Pupil. *A.* No: No Knowledge can be more important than this.

Q. Is there any thing more desirable than the Approbation and Love of God?

Q. Are we likely to have the Love of God, if we neither believe, worship, nor obey according to his Pleasure?

Q. Should you not therefore be very desirous to believe all the Truths which God reveals; to worship him in the Manner he requires; and to practise the Things which he commands?

Q. Must not Humility and Sincerity be proper Qualifications for enquiring successfully about these important Things? —

A. Without *Humility* I am not likely to learn; without *Sincerity* not to practise.

APPLICATION.

Always remember, that without those Dispositions of Mind, Men are in themselves disqualified to find out the Truth, and can expect no Assistance from God; for the Proud and Dishonest are abominable in his Sight. —

Q. Is a Person, who has an high Conceit of his own Worth and Excellence, so able to learn, especially an humbling Doctrine, as one who discerns and is affected with his Ignorance, Weaknesses and Wants?

Q. Is not that Man most likely to find out the Truth, who is fully determined to

search impartially, and lay aside, to the best of his Power, every sinful and foolish Prejudice?

Q. Must not that Man, who is determined not to forsake certain Practices which he lives in, (though they should appear contrary to the Will of God) be less likely to discern the Evidence which makes against his Inclination?——

A. Yes; Inclinations produce a strong Bias on the Judgment.

APPLICATION.

Never forget, that Inclinations, &c. naturally bias your Judgment; and be sure to make this Improvement of it; to watch against those which are evil, and oppose them: But labour and pray for the strongest Inclinations towards the Will of God, and all Truth and Goodness.——

Q. If you have this Disposition, mayn't you hope that God will approve of, and assist you?

A. Yes; because it is a Disposition that God loves.

Q. But if you have the contrary, what may you well expect?——

A. That God will give me up to those evil Affections, which will darken the Mind, and destroy the Soul.——

APPLICATION.

Let these Considerations influence you to watch and pray against all Pride, and secret Guile,

Guile, and for a becoming Sense of your Ignorance and Depravity, and an impartial Readiness to receive the whole Will of God.

—What I am going to lay before you, as an Introduction to the direct Proofs of the Truth of Christian Religion, may well convince you of the Suitableness of such a Temper, as I have been exhorting you to; for I'm going to shew, that such an universal Ignorance and Wickedness had overspread the World before Christ came, that it appears all Men stood in the greatest need of divine Teaching and Instruction.——

2. If almost all the Kingdoms of the World had lost the true Knowledge and Worship of God, and were in general Idolaters, and become exceedingly ignorant, and excessively superstitious and wicked, and without any standing Revelation to assist them in such sad Circumstances, was it not very desirable, and a Thing to be hoped for, that God would send an extraordinary Teacher and Saviour, (and bear public Testimony to him as such) who should reveal his Will, both in regard to Faith, Worship and Practice?——

The State the World was in, &c.

In such Circumstances the World was, when Jesus Christ came from Heaven; and though Learning, Arts, Philosophy, &c. was, or had been at their Height, Religion

was left as false, as prejudicial as ever, if not worse *.——

Q. Was there any Hope then of Religion being afterward rectified by Philosophers?——

Q. Was not this then a fit Time for a divine Instructor and Recoverer to appear in?——

The Nature of Christian Religion. It is allowed by all Persons, that in such an Age, about 1700 Years ago, Jesus Christ, the Author of the Christian Religion, made his Appearance;—and it must be allowed, that there is the greatest Suitableness in the whole of his Life, Doctrines, Precepts and Motives to advance Truth and Righteousness in all their Branches; particularly Piety towards God, Justice and Benevolence towards Men, and Sobriety, Purity, Humility and Heavenly-mindedness in all his faithful Followers. All this is so clear in the New Testament, that one may appeal to a Jew, or an Infidel. But as Men wanted not only to know their Duty, but more of themselves, and of God, and of

* See the Introductory Essays to *Cumberland's* Laws of Nature, translated by *Maxwell*.—Consult *Milton's* beautiful Account of the Errors of Philosophers.

“ But these are false, or little else but Dreams,

“ Conjectures, Fancies, built on nothing firm.

“ The first and wisest of 'em all profess'd

“ To know this only, *that he nothing knew.*”

Milt. Parad. reg. B. IV.

their

their Relation to a future State : So we find Christ has revealed much concerning each of these, and fully settled in what Way, and on what Terms vile, guilty Sinners may be pardoned, be thoroughly sanctified, and be received into God's Favour, and be eternally happy in it.—

Q. Are not these the most important Truths in the World?

Q. If God was to send a Messenger to instruct Mankind, does not your Reason tell you, that these would certainly be some of the chief Points he would reveal and explain?—

These will be hereafter further enlarged on, in their proper Place, under the third general Head of *Inherent Arguments*.

Q. Must not the guilty, corrupted State of Mankind, make the last mentioned Truths to be Truths of the greatest Moment for Men to be acquainted with?

Q. Are you not desirous to know how your Sins may be pardoned,—your Nature be sanctified,—God be your Friend,—and Heaven be eternally your Home?—

A. I am sure I ought to be more concerned for this Knowledge than any other.

You'll find, by reading the New Testament, that Christ (in whom the divine and human Nature were wonderfully united) came not only to tell Men their Duty, and
in

in what way they must be saved, how God was to be worshipped, &c. but actually, by his own Obedience and Sufferings, to work out Salvation for those, who believe in and obey him.—

Q. Don't you see, by this short Account of Christian Religion, how excellent and desirable it is?—

Q. And have you not seen, that the miserable Condition Men were in, made it highly fit there should be a Revelation made concerning such Things?

Q. And may we not well conclude, that God has done what was so fit?—

A. These Considerations make it reasonable to suppose, that God would reveal to Men his Mind and Will for their Salvation.

S E C T. II.

2. *Direct Proofs.*

1. *From Prophecies.*

Tutor. IF we consider the State the World was in when Christ came, it will help us to discover more and more of the Wisdom and Goodness of God, in sending the Lord Jesus, and in bearing Testimony to him in so many ways; as first, by *Prophecy*, then by *Miracles* preceding, attending and following after his Crucifixion, and others which will be hereafter touched on.

Think

Think a little on the first of these at present, *viz.* on *Prophecy*. There was but one Nation in the World, that had the true Knowledge and Worship of God among them, the Nation of the Jews, and that they had was owing to God's particular Providence ; by which they had been separated from others, had had Judges, Kings and Prophets, extraordinarily commissioned of God to save and teach them ; or else they had been ignorant Idolaters, as well as the rest of Mankind.

Q. Don't you know there are some of that People still up and down in the World ?

Q. Do you know what their Religion is ?

Q. In what Books is it contained ?——

A. In the Books of the Old Testament.

You must take notice that the Jewish Religion was not designed for all the World, but only for that People, or such as would worship God with them ; for all the Men of that Religion were to worship God together thrice in a Year, (*Exod.* xxxiv. 23, 24.) But then God gave them to understand, that one of that Nation should in time appear, and establish an universal Religion, and offer Salvation to Gentiles as well as Jews.—This was to be a Person extraordinarily raised up, anointed and set apart, and actuated by God for the Good of all People, and was to be *Messiah*, or *Christ*, which signifies *Anointed*.

Q. If

Q. If their sacred Writings have from first to last a Reference to such a Person, who was to come *, and if in several Places they describe of what Tribe and Family, what Time and Circumstances, what Employment and Design he was to come upon, what Treatment he was to meet with, and a thousand other Particulars, and many of these above a thousand, and all of them about four hundred Years, before they came to pass, what must you think, if a Person appears, in whom these various Accounts unite, and are compleated?—

Q. Must you not conclude this is the Messiah, or divine Person God had promised?

Q. Is it not a strong Argument that those Writings were of a divine Direction?—

Q. And is it not clear that such a Person must be a Person appointed of God?

Q. Who, except Almighty God, (who knows the End from the Beginning) could foresee such distant Transactions?

Q. Who, but he, (who governs throughout the World) could secure the Accomplishment of such extraordinary and so miraculous Events?

I fear you would be weary in going over the many Steps, that the Consideration of these Heads would lead you through; when

* See the Argument from Prophecy vindicated.

you are older, you may do this at your leisure, in reading such Books as are under-mentioned *. At present attend to such Passages as these which follow, and give me your Opinion. —

Q. God promised to *Abraham*, that in his Seed all the Families of the Earth should be blessed, have you ever heard that any Person, (descended from *Abraham*) excepting Christ, procured Blessings for all Men?

Christ to be
a general
Blessing.

Q. Has not Jesus Christ, who, as to his human Nature, descended from *Abraham*, purchased and bestowed the greatest Blessings, such as the clear Knowledge of our Duty, the Pardon of Sins, the Favour of God, and the Happiness of Heaven, and this for Persons of all Nations and People, without Exception?

Q. Again, it is said, that the Gentiles, the Islands, all Flesh should see the Glory of God by means of this Person. Attend to these Texts. *Gen. xlix. 10. The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the Gathering of the People be.* As this Text has expressed of what Tribe he was to be, the next tells you of what Family.

* *Kidder* on the Messias.—Argument from Prophecy vindicated.—Christianity the Perfection of all Religion, &c. chap. 24.—*Clarke's Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 405.

Isaiah xi. 10. And in that Day there shall be a Root of Jesse, (now Jesse was the Father of David) which shall stand for an Ensign of the People; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his Rest shall be glorious. The following Place expressly declares the particular Benefit which the Jews might receive, was but a small Matter in comparison of the Advantage, which was to accrue by this Person's Coming. *Isa. xlix. 6. And he said, It is a light Thing that thou shouldst be my Servant, to raise up the Tribes of Jacob, and to restore the Preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my Salvation to the End of the Earth.*——What do these Texts point out?——

Q. Don't they shew, that a Person was to be sent from God, to be a general Advantage to Jew and Gentile, to all People?

Q. Is not Christ thus become a Light to the Gentiles, to the Isles, to the furthest Part of the Earth?——[Read here the 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12th Verses of the fifteenth Chapter of the *Romans*.]

Q. What Religion had your Forefathers in this Island before they were Christians?

A. They were Idolaters; they were gross Idolaters, they worshipped Wood and Stone.——

Blindly ador'd the Works their Hands had made,
Left Truth, wide wandering Error's gloomy Shade.

APPLICATION.

Be thankful to God that he has revealed himself to you in a clear manner in the Scriptures, and be sure to study them more and more, that you may be saved thereby.

But further, the prophetic Writings not only shew that God designed to send a Person, who should be a general Advantage, but they expressly declare what he should be employed upon, and how he would behave himself. Thus *Isa. xi. 1—6.*

What Christ's
Employment
was to be,
and what his
Temper of
Mind.

And there shall come forth a Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his Roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and of the Fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick Understanding in the Fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the Sight of his Eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his Ears. But with Righteousness shall he judge the Poor, and reprove with Equity for the Meek of the Earth: And he shall smite the Earth with the Rod of his Mouth, and with the Breath of his Lips shall he slay the Wicked. And Righteousness shall be the Girdle of his Loins, and Faithfulness the Girdle of his Reins. The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid: And the Calf,

and the young Lion and the Fatling together, and a Child shall lead them. And in another Place, Isa. xlii. 1—4. Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Street. A bruised Reed shall he not break: And the smoking Flax shall he not quench: He shall bring forth Judgment unto Truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set Judgment in the Earth; and the Isles shall wait for his Law.

Q. Do you discern any Agreement between these Descriptions, and the Temper and Business of Christ?

A. Yes, very plainly. For Jesus Christ was a most tender, humble and meek Prophet, and has established his Religion in the World, which is calculated to change Men's Hearts, reform their Lives, promote Piety, Humanity, and universal Righteousness.

Attend to another Text to this Purpose, (which Christ actually applied to himself, as you'll see, *Luke iv. 18.*) *Isa. lxi. 1—4. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings unto the Meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the Opening of the Prison to them that are bound: To proclaim the acceptable Year of the Lord, and the Day of Vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.*

To appoint unto them, that mourn in Zion, to give unto them Beauty for Ashes, the Oil of Joy for Mourning, the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness, that they might be called Trees of Righteousness, the Planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

Nay, his miraculous Operations seem exactly described, *Isa. xxxv. 5, 6. Then the Eyes of the Blind shall be opened, and the Ears of the Deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame Man leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb sing.*——

His miraculous Operations.

Consider again, at your leisure, how this Person was to be treated, what Sufferings he was to undergo, and what Fruit he was to have of them. Read *Isa. liii.* throughout, with much Care, and you'll find a great many Particulars most exactly fulfilled in him. So that (as a learned Commentator* has observed) this Chapter closely considered brought over an Infidel to the Christian Faith.

What Treatment he was to meet with, &c.

2. Could you set down and draw a more lively Representation of the real Sufferings, which Christ underwent, than you here find?

I might go on and shew you, that this divine Person was to have a Forerunner, *Isa. xl. 3. The Voice of him that crieth in the Wilderness, Prepare ye the*

Was to have one sent before him to prepare his Way.

* See *Lowth* on *Isaiah liii.*

Way of the Lord, make straight in the Desert a Highway for our God. So Malachi iii. 1. Behold I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the Way before me, and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple: Even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. Mal. iv. 5, 6. Behold I will send you Elijah the Prophet, before the Coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord. And he shall turn the Heart of the Fathers to the Children, and the Heart of the Children to their Fathers; lest I come and smite the Earth with a Curse. These are the more remarkable, as they are the last Words in the Old Testament.————

Q. Was there any such extraordinary Person raised up by God, who prepared the Way for Jesus Christ?

A. Yes; *John the Baptist* preached Repentance, and taught the Jews that Christ was among them; and declared, that as for himself he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose the Latchet of his Shoes.

It may be very instructive to compare the last mentioned Place of *Mal. iv. 5, 6.* with what is recorded, *Mark i. 1—9. The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets, Behold I send my Messenger before thy Face, which shall prepare thy Way before thee. The Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, Prepare ye*

ye the *Way of the Lord*, make his *Paths straight*. John did baptize in the *Wilderness*, and preach the *Baptism of Repentance*, for the *Remission of Sins*. And there went out unto him all the *Land of Judea*, and they of *Jerusalem*, and were all baptized of him in the *River of Jordan*, confessing their *Sins*. And John was clothed with *Camels Hair*, and with a *Girdle of Skin* about his *Loins*; and he did eat *Locusts* and *wild Honey*: And preached, saying, *There cometh one mightier than I after me, the Latchet of whose Shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose*. I indeed have baptized you with *Water*; but he shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost*. And it came to pass in those *Days*, that *Jesus* came from *Nazareth in Galilee*, and was baptized of John in *Jordan*. Luke iii. 3, 16, 17, 18. And he came unto all the *Country about Jordan*, preaching the *Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of Sins*. John answered, and said unto them all, I indeed baptize you with *Water*, but one mightier than I cometh, the *Latchet of whose Shoes I am not worthy to unloose*; he shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost*, and with *Fire*: *Whose Fan is in his Hand*, and he will thoroughly purge his *Flour*, and will gather the *Wheat* into his *Garner*, but the *Chaff* he will burn with *Fire* unquenchable. And many other things in his *Exhortation* preached he unto the *People*. (Compare this with *Mal. iii. 2, 3*.)

The Time of
the Messiah's
Coming fore-
told.

It were easy to lead you also to see that the Time of the Messiah's Appearance in the World, was prophesied of, and Limits set to it, this may be learnt from *Gen. xlix. 10. Haggai ii. 6—10. Dan. ix. 24. seq.* and that at this time Christ came.

The Jews
and Gentiles
expected his
Coming at
this Time.

All this is strengthened by considering, that about the Time that Christ came the Jewish Nation were actually expecting the Person, the Prophets had foretold, that it is Fact they did so, is not only proved from the New Testament, but from the concurrent Testimony of Jewish, Christian and Heathen Writers *. It is not less apparent, that the Place of his Birth was foretold, *Mic. v. 2.* and that he was to be cut off, but not for himself, *Dan. ix. 26. Zach. xiii. 7. Isa. liii. 8.*—and yet that he was to be prosperous, and be a Priest and King for ever, *Isa. liii. 10, 11, 12. Psal. cx.*—These and many other things might be enlarged on, but it would take up too much Time.—

2. Upon the whole, what do you conclude from this short Account of the Prophecies relating to the Messias; does not Jesus Christ appear to be the Person he expressly prophesied of?

2. Has not he been a very great and general Blessing to the World?

* See *Bish. Lond.* 1st Pastoral Let. p. 24.

Q. Was not his Employment to preach good Tidings to the Meek, &c. according as the Prophet *Isaiab* foretold?

Q. Was not his Temper most meek, and did not he deal tenderly with the bruised Reed, and kindle the smoking Flax?

A. Yes; I see the Agreement is most wonderful.

A Chain of Prophecies binds to assent,
Jesus is that Saviour whom God hath sent.

APPLICATION.

If you have attended to the Gospel Accounts of Christ's Life, you must have seen the wonderful Agreement between what was foretold of the Messiah, and what was fulfilled in him. — Thus, in a Word, was it declared, that Messiah should be a Blessing to Jew and Gentiles, to the Isles afar off; — that he should meekly spread all Righteousness and Truth; — should work Miracles; — should be very evilly treated; — have an extraordinary Messenger sent before him; — be born before the Sceptre and Lawgiver should depart from *Judah*; and *Daniel's* seventy Weeks be accomplished; — have *Bethlehem* for his Birth-place; — be cruelly treated and slain for the Salvation of Men; — be afterwards prosperous, and reign King and Priest for ever. — Were these things (and an hundred more which might be mentioned) laid down in the Prophets,

68 RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

phets, as the Description of the Character, Office, and Circumstances of the divine Person, whom God would send to save and bless the World, and can you doubt whether Christ be he, when in him, and *in him alone*, all these things are most wonderfully accomplished?—Think seriously and often of this wonderful Agreement, through so many particular Descriptions, and let it increase your Regards to the dear Redeemer, and make you attend to the Call of God, *Hear ye him.*——

Q. What Regard therefore ought you to pay to him in all he has said?——

A. The highest Regard possible.

Q. Should you humbly learn from him, and sincerely obey him?——

You should remember, indeed, it may well be expected, that Prophecies should have some Obscurity in them; and therefore it is best to consider them as casting Light upon one another, and to remember that most, if not all the Texts I have referred you to, have been applied by many *Jewish Writers* (some of whom lived before Christ came) to their expected Messias.

Thus I have led you to see, that the World greatly wanted a Revelation of the Mind and Will of God, and that Christian Religion, in the general View of it, appears to be, what was wanted;—and that Christ's Coming had been long foretold, with great Variety
of

of attending Circumstances, and was expected at that time.—You have seen various Prophecies, of many hundred Years standing fulfilled in him : These are so many preceding Proofs of his being the Messiah, the Sent of God. Such a Person was wanted, and might be hoped for ;—he had been spoken of by all God's holy Prophets, from the Beginning of the World. So that you see here is *antecedent* Testimony to this Truth. *Jesus Christ is a great Prophet and Saviour, sent by God to teach and save the World.*

CH A P. V.

2. *Concomitant Proofs.*

Tutor. I Shall next help you to see something of the Evidence arising from the Miracles that attended on Christ about the Time of his Birth,——in his Life,——at his Death,——and presently after it.——

Q. If this Person, who was pointed out by Prophecies, and appealed to their Testimony, had and gave numberless miraculous Evidences of the divine Power of God being with him, will not this give the strongest Proof that he was the true Messiah?

I

The Way of
knowing the
Truth of past
Facts.

I shall briefly shew you, that a vast Number of Miracles were worked by Christ Jesus, after you have told me in what Way we are capable of knowing, whether there was such a Man as *Alexander* the Great, or *Julius Cæsar*, and that they performed the public Actions which are imputed to them; for the same sort of Evidence (only more full and express) there is for the Miracles which attended on Christ.

Q. How do we know that there ever was such a Person as *Julius Cæsar*?

A. By History.

Q. How that he came over into this Island, and made Conquests here?

A. By Histories, which relate such Events.

Q. In what way must we, who live in this Age, know the Things of former Ages, and how will Men 400 Years hence know what is done now?

A. By History.

True, this is the way to make the future Age acquainted with the Transactions of this. — They may, indeed, possibly be handed down from Father to Son, by Word of Mouth; but this would be a far less perfect way. There are also other Methods of Conveyance; such as public and continued Customs from the time of such Facts, or anniversary Days in remembrance of them; so
Coins,

Coins, Monuments, &c. These are all so many Ways of conveying down to Posterity the Truth of Facts from the Time when they were done; but these can't be so clear and express as a written History may.

2. If certain Facts are handed down by several Histories wrote and made public in the Age wherein they were done by Persons, who were Eye-witnesses, or immediate Associates with those who were, which Persons

Various ways of handing down the Facts on which Christianity is founded.

give all the Marks, that can be desired of their Honesty, being, at the same time, under Persecution, and ready to die in support of the Truths they wrote, should they not be believed?

Thus the Miracles, which Christ worked, (or which were done in full Testimony to him) are wrote by no less than four Historians, *Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*. These Histories were wrote for, and given to Christians of the first Age, who could, with the greatest Ease, acquaint themselves with the general Truth of the Facts. The Writers appear to be Persons of great Integrity, and both they, and the Persons to whom these Histories were immediately given, were continually exposed to Persecution and Death itself, for believing and propagating Christian Religion, which was pub-

publickly founded, and must have stood or fell, as those Facts were true or false *. But further,

Q. If beside several Histories professedly relating these Facts, there are others wrote by Enemies, which bear a Testimony to the Truth of such Actions being done, does not this add to the Weight of Evidence for the Truth of them?

Q. Thus Evidence may be brought from Jews, Heathens, Mahometans, that Christ did work Miracles; should not this convince us, that he really did such Things, and so that God was with him?

Q. Again, if moreover there have been, from the very Age in which such Facts were performed, public Customs introduced, and continued down, which were founded on the Belief gained by these Facts, do not these Customs also attest to their Truth?

Thus the Separation of the first Day of the Week, rather than the seventh †, to religious Worship;—the immediate Use of the Rite of Baptism,—of the Lord's Supper;—the Appointment of Ministers and Teachers to establish and spread this Truth, that God had sent Jesus Christ to save the

* See *Baxter's Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part II. c. 7.

† The first Christians paid a Regard to both Days, though the first Day of the Week, being that on which Christ arose from the Dead, was peculiarly observed.

World ;—their paying religious Regards to Jesus Christ ;—praying to God always in his Name ;——singing to his Honour ;——and closing their Service with Doxologies, that shewed their Persuasion that he was a divine Person, ascended to Heaven. These, and many other such Customs and Practices, at that Time begun, prove those Christians, who lived in the Age of Miracles, were convinced of the Truth of Christian Religion, (and therefore, to be sure, of Christ's Miracles ; because to these he had often appealed, as so many Proofs of his coming from God ;) and these early Customs most evidently prove their full Persuasion of Christ's Resurrection, Ascension to Heaven, and eminent Exaltation there.

2. Again, if further some of the most remarkable and eminent Facts in such Histories, and such as may be called foundational ones, have been singled out, and the Memory of them kept up by anniversary Days, or Holidays in every Year, from near the Time in which those Wonders were performed, are not these so many Testimonies to the Truth, and Reality of the Things which these commemorate ?

Thus, from the Time in which Christ died to this Day, there has not only been an Observation of the Christian Sabbath, (called from the Beginning the *Lord's-Day*) of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, religious Regards

to Christ, &c. but a very early Separation of Days and Seasons, to commemorate the most remarkable and foundational Facts; such as the Conception of the Virgin *Mary*, the Birth of Christ, his Death, Resurrection and Ascension, and Descent of the Holy Ghost; thus *Christmas, Easter, Ascension-day, Whitsuntide, &c.* are so many historical Days, (if I may so speak) and as Christ's Resurrection is a miraculous Fact, (which, being made sure, will, itself, give Evidence to all the rest) the very early Practice of commemorating it, and the Discords which happened between the Eastern and Western Churches, about settling *Easter* Holidays, shew the firm Persuasion the early Christians had of the Truth and Importance of the Thing, and their Care about the right transmitting the Memory of it, in a public manner, to Posterity.——

Thus have I led you to see several ways, in which the Truth of Facts may be handed down to Posterity.——

Q. Which was the first way?

A. By History wrote by Eye-Witnesses, or those who attended on such, as were the Witnesses to them.

Q. Which was the second?

A. By the Acknowledgment of Enemies.

Q. Which was the third?

A. By new Customs established on the Belief of the Truth of those Facts, which
are

are, by these means, witnessed to through every Age?

Q. Which was the fourth?

A. Commemorating Seasons and Days in every Year, which point to the grand and fundamental Facts, which render the Belief of all the rest easy and natural. —

Q. As you have seen how you may be satisfied of the Truth of Facts done Ages ago, and as you may have full Satisfaction in all the above-mentioned ways of the chief Facts on which Christianity is founded, by *Histories**, by *Customs*, by *commemorating Days and Seasons*, and this with clearer, and stronger Evidence than any other Facts that ever have been done, have been attended with, are you not bound in Conscience to believe, and be influenced by such Facts?

Q. If you must believe certain Things on a less degree of Evidence, is it not reasonable that you believe Things on a greater degree, nay on the greatest that the Nature of the Thing admits of? —

You are bound therefore to give Credit to the *wonderful Works* wrought in Proof of the divine Mission of our blessed Lord, sufficient to demonstrate that God sent him; (though all are not recorded that were wrought, for the Historians have not related all, as we may be sure from what St. John says, *John* xxi. 25.) Miracles which

* See Chapter the 8th on the Authenticity and divine Authority of the New Testament.

attended on the Birth of Christ,——which were worked by him in the three or four last Years of his Life,——and which followed upon his Death. Consider them well over, (particularly those which he himself performed) and tell me whether there is not an equal Display of Power, Wisdom, and Goodness in them;——what Blessings did they yield to Men;——how proper to convince them of God's Mercy and Goodness, as well as Power; and that he would not be less ready to do their Souls good than their Bodies. [See Appendix II. being a Summary of Christ's miraculous Works.]

Q. Do not these Miracles prove, that Christ came from God?

Q. Did not such Works wrought by one, who appealed to God for the Truth of this Assertion, that he came from him, claim Men's most serious Regard?

Q. Would not Men be inexcusable, who refused to attend to him?

Q. Is it not absurd to think Christ could have done such Works without Power from God?

Q. Since therefore God had, by his Prophets, foretold that he would send such an extraordinary Person.;——since the Jews were actually in Expectation of him at that time;——since he was ushered into the World with certain Displays of divine Power;——exercised a divine Power during

ing the whole of his public Life;—and after he was dead the same divine Power raised him from the Dead *;—has not God hereby given us abundant Evidence, that he was with Christ from first to last, and that he is the Messiah who was to come?

Q. Ought not you and I to hearken to and obey this Person, whom God has thus witnessed to?

A. Most certainly God expects that we should, and Woe unto us if we do not.

Q. Will not disregarding this glorious Person be a Contempt cast on God?

Q. Will not rejecting him be a rejecting God's Testimony, and acting as if God was a Liar?

A. Yes; for no Man could do those mighty Works, unless God were with him; and if God was with him, he must be true, or God would be a Supporter of Falshood.

APPLICATION.

Remember this, and let the Testimony, which God gave to his Son, both by Prophecies and Miracles attending on him, and wrought by him, and particularly the divine Power displayed in raising him from the Dead, let these confirm your Faith, and fix your Resolution to accept of and submit to him as

* See *Dutton* on the Resurrection.—Observations on the History and Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, by G. West, Esq:

your Teacher, King and Saviour.—I might lead you here to attend to the Prophecies delivered by Christ, and the divine Example which he set, &c. —

Q. Must not Christ have been acquainted with God's Designs, when he could foretel not only the Treatment he was to meet with from Men, from his Disciples, and from his Enemies, but also how his Enemies should be treated, even exemplarily punished, their City totally destroyed before that Generation was at an End, and they be led away Captive into all Nations, whilst he, at the same time, declared he should rise from the Dead, his Religion should gain ground, and be established in the Earth?

Q. Who, but the all-knowing and mighty God, could foresee or secure such Events as these?

Q. And who could make them known to the World, but God, or him to whom he revealed them? —

A. Certainly no Person.

APPLICATION.

Remember these things, and often think of it, that this People, of whom Christ spoke, are to this Day dispersed, their City and Temple waste, and they still expecting a Messiah. Indeed they expect him to bring temporal Deliverance, and to save them from their Enemies, and make them the happiest People

People on Earth *. This Notion made them so averſe to Chriſt, when he came, and was a great means of their rejecting him. They ſeemed to have no Senſe of its being the greateſt Happineſs to be delivered from the Guilt and Power of their Sins, to be made actually holy, to be truly lovely in the Sight of God, and entitled to the full Happineſs of the Kingdom of Heaven. Their Thoughts run on temporal Dominion, having all their Enemies in Subjection, and being illuſtrious in this World.——

Q. But what do you think is beſt in itſelf?

Q. Which do you think, God Almighty, and indeed all wiſe and good Beings, would be moſt concerned to promote?

Q. Which do you think is moſt likely, God ſhould ſend his Son to bring to paſs the Deliverance of one Nation from the Power of others, or of all Perſons in the World from the Power of their Sins, and the Damnation of Hell?

* This is the Expectation of the Jews in our Days, as appears from their Writings, (*Limbor. Am. Coll. cum Judæo*) and verbal Acknowledgments; being, as far as I can judge, of the ſame Opinion with him, who (as I am well informed by the Gentleman to whom he ſpoke it) ſaid he would not go over *the Threshold* for ſuch a Meſſiah as ours, who would permit the Jews to ſuffer as they did by the *Romans*;——but expected one who ſhould raiſe them to temporal Dominion.

Q. Or,

Q. Or, in other Words, if you consult Reason, which do you think God is most likely extraordinarily to promote, Piety and universal Righteousness amongst all People, or Dominion and Riches in one?

A. Nothing can be clearer, than that Piety and Righteousness are most his Delight, and therefore what he will most promote.

Q. Must you not therefore conclude, from the natural Notions you have of God, that such an extraordinary Person was sent to bring about spiritual and eternal Salvation, and this not to one People, but all?

Q. Would not this be the best Fulfilment of God's Promise to *Abraham*, that in his Seed all the Families of the Earth should be blessed? —

But the Consideration of Christ's Predictions comes rather under the *Subsequent Arguments*. — From what has now been said, you have seen God's Seal set to the Truth of what Christ taught.

Q. In what Character therefore should you receive him?

A. As the Son of God, and Saviour of Men.

Q. And how should you receive his Doctrines, Precepts, Promises and Threatenings?

A. I ought to receive his Doctrines with lively Faith, his Precepts I should most uprightly obey, his Promises most firmly rely

rely on, and his Threatenings should awe my Soul to keep me steady to the Faith, Hope and Practice of the Gospel.

APPLICATION.

This is the Regard you ought to pay to this divine Teacher, and if you humbly wait on God in Prayer for his holy Spirit and Grace, you will be enabled so to act, which will certainly end in your eternal Felicity, through the Merits and Mediation of this only and all-sufficient Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord.

Seek genuine Faith in him that works by Love,
He'll lead you safe to Realms of Bless above.

C H A P. VI.

3. *Inherent Proofs, or Internal Arguments.*

Tutor. **T**HIS brings me to shew you another kind of Evidence for the Truth of Christian Religion, which is called *Internal*, and it arises from considering the Design and natural Tendency of this Religion to promote the Glory of God, the Cause of Goodness and Truth, and the everlasting Happiness of Men. Now, to any one humbly and seriously considering the Tendency of Christ's Example, Doctrine, Precepts, Promises and Threatenings, it will appear

appear they all conspire to promote those glorious Ends.

Q. Does not this render it very likely, at first View, that Christ and his Religion are from God? —

But moreover, here is not only a Fitness to advance God's Glory, and promote Piety and universal Righteousness, by turning Men from Sin to God, (not in external Appearance, but inwardly and heartily) and so to make them holy and happy; but more than this, by Christ's perfect Obedience to God, under the greatest Trials, to lay a wise, justifiable Foundation for God's accepting penitent Sinners, and giving everlasting Salvation to all, who come to him through his perfectly holy and righteous Son.

Q. What can more highly discover God's Love of Righteousness and Compassion to Sinners, than this?

If these things were fully considered, you would be surprized to see the amazing Suitableness there is in the several Parts of Christian Religion, to make Men in love with God and Goodness, and to convince them of God's Good-will towards them, enough to make one sing as the Angels and heavenly Host did, when they revealed Christ's Birth to the Shepherds, *Luke ii. 14. Glory be to God in the highest, and on Earth Peace and Good-will towards Men.*

Q. Don't

Q. Don't you discern this is god-like?

Q. Which are the two things you should be most concerned about?

A. To love God and Goodness above all other things, that so God may be glorified by me,—and to have God well pleased with me, that I may be happy with him for ever; to glorify God and enjoy him forever, being the noblest End of Man.

APPLICATION.

Yes, my young Friend, this is worth living for, to love God, and Goodness, above all other things to his Glory; and to be beloved of God, so as to enjoy him for ever. These are in themselves the noblest Possessions in the Universe, and will issue in the everlasting Happiness of the Possessor.—To these Ends Christian Religion leads you;—these it secures, so as no other Religion can fairly pretend to;—for it gives a clearer Account of God's moral Perfections, and of Man's Relation to Eternity. It offers the greatest Help at present, the greatest Reward hereafter, and denounces the most awful Threatenings;—and what is yet more, it shews Man's depraved and guilty State in the most just and lively Colours; declares the Necessity of an internal Change, or being born again, before he can be fit for Heaven;—declares there is an Agent called the *Spirit of God*, whose Office it is to

to produce this Change ;——and in regard to Man's Guilt, it declares Christ shed his Blood for the Forgiveness of Sins.——And thus Man is clearly acquainted, that he is now upon Trial for Eternity ;——that his Nature is depraved, and may be made holy by God's good Spirit ;——that as a Sinner he must be condemned by God's holy Law, but that, upon his believing in Christ, his Repentance and future Endeavours shall be accepted and rewarded with the never ending Happiness of Heaven ; because Christ was sinlessly obedient to God.——Thus Life and Immortality are brought to light : the necessity of a holy Life, and how to gain it is shewn, and the way in which God, consistent with his Justice, Wisdom and Mercy, would make penitent, believing Sinners eternally happy.——These, which are the glorious and distinguishing Doctrines of the Gospel, are so suited to the Wants of Men, (especially as repenting, broken-hearted Sinners find) that nothing can be more so, and so display God's Glory, that nothing can be thought of to do it more ; which things laid together, carry in them the Marks of divine Contrivance and Execution, and so give Testimony to this Religion being of God.——It is particularly to this I would call your Attention for.

Q. Young as you are, don't you know you have sinned against God ?

Q. Do

2. Do you find, that you love God with all your Heart and Soul, and Mind and Strength?

2. Should you not do so? I might ask whether you don't find yourself little concerned about the Favour of God,—little grieved for your Sins,—very prone to do wrong, and backward to do right;—whether you have not a thousand times broke God's Laws; all which, if rightly considered, shews the Need you stand in of God's holy Spirit to make you good, and of Christ to atone for your Sins.—Were you convinced of the Evil of Sin, and your own Sinfulness, &c. you would see God's Wisdom and Goodness in this Method of Salvation by Jesus Christ, which would yield a strong Argument for the Truth of this Religion. I shall not insist on this any longer, but point out what you can't help seeing, if you read the New Testament with any Care. Read over the New Testament seriously, with this Enquiry as you go along. Does it tend to produce in me a supreme Love of God and Goodness; and does it shew me how God will take pleasure in me? Does it declare no Professions, no Zeal, no not becoming a Martyr, will serve instead of Holiness? for that without *Holiness* *no Man shall see God*, (*Heb. xii. 14.*)

2. May we not then conclude this is a Religion, the Practice of which will make

I

you

you prevailingly holy, and acceptable to God, through the Intercession of Christ?

But I would particularly shew you some of the Excellencies of this Religion, (and so come at the internal Evidences for it) by the following Things. Thus, it is so far from allowing fleshly Indulgences, or the Lust of Power and Riches, &c. that it enjoins the greatest Temperance and Purity,—and a heavenly instead of a worldly and carnal Mind *.——It is a Religion free from cumbersome Ceremonies and Rites, (which are apt to call off the Regard from the Heart) and has nothing belonging to it, that tends to prevent its being universal, as was the Case of the Jewish, and is (if I mistake not) of the Mahometan; the former was designed to be national, and it was wisely ordered, by peculiar Rites and Forms, to keep that People in the true Worship of God, whilst all the rest of the World had turned from him. The Mahometan Religion, whilst it appears to make great Allowances for a carnal and ambitious Mind, abounds also with frivolous Ceremonies, seems to require yearly a Pilgrimage to *Mecca* from every Mussulman, who has Strength of Body, and sufficient to defray the Expences †.

* See this more fully treated of under Subsequent Arguments, Head the 3d.

† See *Sale's Koran*, p. 23, 48.

2. Is not that Religion most excellent, which, except one or two most instructive Rites, enjoins only the worshipping God in Spirit and Truth, and abounding in all Righteousness and Goodness? —

This is the Case with Christ's Religion, you'll find no Stress laid on external Observances, Washings, scrupulous Abstinencies, Pilgrimages, much less any Command to promote and spread his Religion by Force of Arms, or any Promise of Happiness, if you die fighting in the Cause. No, this last is suitable only to one, who could no otherwise secure and propagate his Religion, (which was the Case of *Mahomet*) but Christ, who had Prophecy, Miracles, Men's Consciences to appeal to for the Truth and Excellencies of what he taught and did, whose Followers also were to have the Power of working Miracles, and who was himself to have all Power in Heaven and Earth given to him, such a Man needed not to require his Followers to spread his Religion by the Sword, or give them any Promise to encourage them to do it, because he would secure it not only without Force, but against all the Force, Influence and Craft of the most powerful and malicious Enemies. This I shall hereafter shew Christ did, by the wonderful Propagation and Establishment of his Religion

in the World, against long combined Opposition *.

Q. What is the Sum of what has been just now said?

A. That Christianity forbids a carnal worldly Mind, and commands a spiritual and heavenly one;—that it has no frivolous or cumbersome Ceremonies, nor any thing to hinder its being an universal Religion; nor in the least allows of Fraud or Force to support or propagate it.——

Consider again, that Christ does actually prescribe the most spiritual Worship, requires the sincerest Piety, most extensive Goodness, and the fullest Self-Government.

Q. Do you remember any thing Christ says in regard to the manner in which God is to be worshipped?

A. *God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth,* John iv. 24.

Q. Observe further, that Christ singles out the Love of God, and the Love of Men, as the two principal Commandments; do you remember the Words, in which he does thus?

* Here is a proper Place to expose the abominable Principles and Practices of the Religion of Papists, such of them especially who are for propagating Popery by all fraudulent and cruel means, at the Expence of Faith, and with Seas of Blood.

A. Matth.

A. Matth. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.

This is the first and great Commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.

On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

APPLICATION.

Ever remember this.—To love God with all the Heart, &c. that is, sincerely, uniformly and operatively is the great fundamental Commandment,—and to love your Neighbour as yourself, is the second like unto it.——

Q. Shan't you endeavour to please God in every thing, if you thus love him?

Q. Does not requiring this Love, and declaring it to be the first and great Commandment, lead to the best Foundation for all right Conduct?

Q. Does not God require to do whatsoever is right and fit for you to do?

Q. Is not therefore the sincere Love of God the likeliest means to make Men do whatever is right?

Q. But if we consider the Love of God as a Principle of Piety only, will it not, if sincere and uniform, be operative, and the

surest way to produce all religious Regards to him?

Q. And is not loving one's Neighbour as one's self (that is, really and truly loving him) the surest way to be always true, just and merciful towards him? —

Thus, then, we see Christ has singled out the two best Rules that can be laid down for securing and promoting true Religion and Righteousness.

Q. Do you remember any of his Commandments which relate to Self-Government?

A. Luke ix. 23. Matth. v. 29, 30. Matth. vi. 19, 20, 21. *And he said to them all, If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily, and follow me. And if thy right Eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy Members should perish, and not that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell. And if thy right Hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy Members should perish, and not that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell. Lay not up for yourselves Treasures upon Earth, where Moth and Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break*

break through and steal. For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.—

Thus you see Christ's Religion requires the sublimest Piety, the most extensive Righteousness, and the truest Self-Government, and the most exalted heavenly Mind.— What excellent, what pleasant Work it would be, to shew how he exemplified all these in his own Life! You may be assisted in part by looking into the third Appendix, which gives a View of his Temper, Course and Manner of Life.

It would lead me on almost without End to shew how Christ's Religion is adapted to advance the Glory of all God's Perfections, to secure and promote natural Religion;— how exactly and amazingly it is suited to the Wants of Men, just what their ignorant,— depraved,—weak and guilty State required *. —But I must only tell you, in a word, it were easy to prove that pure Religion and universal Righteousness are, in the best manner, provided for, by Example,—Precept,—offered Assistances, —highest Rewards,—severest Punishments,—most engaging and constraining Motives, (where Persons are not lost to all Sense of the most unmerited Favours) and that the Glory of all God's Attributes is illustrated, and that temporal

* See Religion of Jesus delineated.—And Jesus Christ the Mediator and Advocate, &c.

and eternal Salvation of Men are taken the best care of, in a way most worthy of God, as it displays his Holiness and his Mercy most remarkably, and beyond what any Religion known in the World can make even any Pretence to, each of these would be a distinct internal Evidence or Reason, (arising from the Nature of Christian Religion) to prove its Original to be from God. But we must not stay on this Head any longer *.

Q. Can you give me the Sum of what has been said under this Head?

A. That the Christian Religion appears, from its Nature, to come from God; because it is most wonderfully suited to the fallen State of Mankind, and reveals the sure way of Salvation.—It forbids a carnal and worldly Mind, and requires the contrary;—it is free from all cumbersome Ceremonies, and contrary to all Fraud and Cruelty;—and lays the best Ground for sincere Piety, extensive Righteousness, and Self-Government; or, in one word, it is the best calculated to promote the Glory of God,——the Cause of Truth and Goodness,——and the everlasting Happiness of Men.

God's Wisdom, Goodness, Truth, with ev'ry Grace,
Shines in this Scheme of saving human Race.

* See more hereafter under the Head of *the Spread and Establishment of Christianity in the World.*

APPLICATION.

Lay these Things, my young Friend, to your Heart, and they will serve as a great Security against Infidelity. You'll find Persons in the World who would draw you into a Disbelief of the holy Religion of Jesus Christ, but observe, and you'll find they are Men void of the Fear and Love of God, Men devoted to Pleasure, Profit or Honour, as their chief Good, who terminate their Views within the Bounds of this Life, and live as if they had no Souls, and as if there was no future State of Rewards and Punishments, which yet you have seen, from the Light of Nature, is demonstrable.—

Again, attending to these internal Evidences of the Truth of Christian Religion, will rectify your Judgment in many important Points, wherein many professing Christians mistake; *e. g.* on what Account God is pleased to pardon and justify penitent Believers; not for the Good Works which they have done, (as if these could be meritorious of his saving Mercy) but for the sake of what his Son has done, and suffered.—

The Knowledge of these Things will prevent the gross Mistake of others, who expect Salvation, though they remain carnal and sensual Persons, addicted to sinful Indulgences, or worldly minded, seeking after and prizing the Creature more than the Cre-

Creator. It will no less guard you against the Error of those who place Religion in Ceremonies, or Zeal for a Party, or a Set of Opinions, which leave the Heart unsanctified, and the Life unreformed: It will clearly discover the dreadful Mistake of those who go about to promote Religion by Frauds and Cruelty, (and may therefore well steel you against Popery *, which is propagated by Deceit and Cruelty, as the fullest Evidence of History shews.) In a word, you may learn, from what has now been said, that the Religion of the Lord Jesus is most spiritual, heavenly and god-like, transforming all the genuine Professors of it into a Likeness to God, in some degree, especially in Sincerity, Righteousness, Mercy, and a Love and Endeavour after universal Holiness †.——O therefore take heed that you mistake not in so important a Point, nor be satisfied with being only *almost* a Christian!

* See Jesuits Morals.—The History of the Inquisition, by *Limb.*—Popery always the same.—*Great Britain's Memorial against Popery, &c.*

† The Effects of it may be seen and read with much Advantage, in a valuable Piece, entitled, *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, by Dr. Doddridge.

C H A P. VII.

4. *Subsequent Arguments.*

Tutor. **I** Proceed now to help you to discern some of the many Proofs which followed Christ's Ascension to Heaven, or which attended on the Apostles and first Christians.—I shall single out three; the Completion of what Christ had foretold;—the Miracles which his Followers worked;—and the Spread and Establishment of Christian Religion in the World.

Under the Head of Predications, I shall point out four Particulars.—The Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, and to what End;—the Treatment Christ's Apostles were to meet with in the World;—the Destruction of the Temple, &c.——

1. The Account of Christ's Predications.

2. Did Christ several times, whilst on Earth, promise his Followers, that after he left them they should receive extraordinary Influences from God's holy Spirit, to guide them to all Truth, (relative to his Religion, that is) to comfort them, to enable them to work Miracles, &c?

The Holy Ghost promised, &c.

If

* If you don't remember them, read the following Promises, *John* xiv. 26. *John* xvi. 13, 14. *Acts* i. 4, 5, 8. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all Things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all Truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you Things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the Promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with Water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many Days hence. But ye shall receive Power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.

These are so many exprefs Assurances given to his Apostles, that they should not be left to themselves, when he was gone from them. There are other Texts, which might have been mentioned, as *John* xv. 26. *John* xvi. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. But what I desire you particularly further to remember, is

* The Persons instructed should learn a Text or two, and under each of these Heads of Prophecy.

Mark

Mark xvi. 17, 18. And these Signs shall follow them that believe; In my Name shall they cast out Devils, they shall speak with new Tongues, they shall take up Serpents, and if they drink any deadly Thing, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay Hands on the Sick, and they shall recover.

Q. Do you remember any Texts of Scripture, that shew that Christ's Promise was fulfilled?

If not, consult the following Passages.

Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 33. Acts iii. 1—12.

Acts iv. 31—34. Acts xxviii. 3—10.

Indeed the whole History of the Acts of the Apostles, and several of St. Paul's Epistles, (see such Places, as *Rom. xv. 18, 19. 1 Cor. xii. 2 Cor. xii. 12. Galat. iii. 1—6.*) shew plainly that the Holy Ghost was given both to the Apostles, and to those who believed their Report, and that it was, as St. Mark says, Christ had declared it should be, *In his Name they should cast out Devils,—they should speak with new Tongues, &c.——*

Q. Must not Christ have known the Counsel of God, before he could foretel such wonderful Events as these?

Q. Must he not have been sure, that God would thus bear Testimony to his Followers, before he would have made such Declarations?

Q. If these had not come to pass, would not these Predictions have been an Argument

ment against the Truth of his being sent of God?

2. For, mayn't this be always relied on, as a certain Truth, that he whom God sends *speaketh the Words of God*, and that all God's Words are true?—

Again, Christ not only assured his Disciples of the extraordinary Aids of the Holy Spirit, but he told them expressly what Treatment they should meet with, when they were employed in propagating his Religion.——

2. What Treatment they were to meet with.

2. Can you give me a Passage or two that expresses this Treatment?

If not, read the following Places.

John xv. 20, 21. John xvi. 1—4. Remember the Word that I said unto you, The Servant is not greater than the Lord; if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my Saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my Name's sake; because they know not him that sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, that you should not be offended. They shall put you out of the Synagogues; yea the Time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God Service. And these things will they do unto you; because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the Time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.

them : *And these things I said not unto you at the Beginning ; because I was with you.*

Q. Don't these Words shew, that Christ foreknew the Persecutions, Excommunications, and violent Death, which would be the Portion of his Followers ?

Read but the History of the *Acts*, and you'll see all this was exactly fulfilled ; particularly consult the following Places. *Acts* iv. 1—4. chap. v. 17, 18, 40. chap. vi. 9. *ad fin.* chap. vii. 54. *ad fin.* chap. viii. 1—5, &c.

I might direct you to other Predictions of the like sort, as *Matth.* x. 16—26. *Mark* xiii. 9—14. *Luke* xxi. 12. *John* xv. 19. ch. xvi. 2. which, when consulted, will further prove that Christ was a divine Prophet.—

But we must hasten to the next Head, and shew you something very remarkable in Christ's Predictions of the *Spread of his Religion*, and its overcoming all Opposition. This Knowledge was beyond human, and could be certainly declared by no one, except acquainted with the Counsel of God.

Q. Can you give me two or three Passages, where Christ foretells this ?——

If you are unacquainted with them, attend to these which follow.

Matth. xiii. 31, 32, 33. *Another Parable put he forth unto them, saying, The Kingdom*

3. How the the Gospel was to spread in the World.

of Heaven is like to a Grain of Mustard Seed, which a Man took and sowed in his Field. Which is indeed the least of all Seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among Herbs, and becometh a Tree; so that the Birds of the Air come and lodge in the Branches thereof. Another Parable spake he unto them, The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto Leaven, which a Woman took and hid in three Measures of Meal, till the whole was leavened. Mark xiii. 27. And then shall he send his Angels, and shall gather together his Elect from the four Winds, from the uttermost Part of the Earth to the uttermost Part under Heaven.— And this Spread of the Gospel was tacitly foretold in those Words, Mark xiv. 9. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole World, this also which she hath done shall be spoken of, for a Memorial of her.— Thus the same Person, at the same time, that he told his Followers, they were to meet with the strongest Opposition, and lay down their Lives in his Cause, yet gave them to understand, that the Truths they preached should prevail, and be established in the World, so that the Gates of Hell should never prevail against it, Matth. xv. 18.*

* See *Lightfoot*, Vol. II. p. 19. where he quotes from a Jew the great Height to which the Mustard Seed grow in the Eastern Countries.

Q. Since the Fact has been, and is at this Day, as Christ above 1700 Years ago foretold it should be, is not this a strong Reason for you to believe in this divine Person, as the Sent of God to teach and save the World? —

A. Yes; I ought to believe and obey him, who was so highly honoured of God.

Once more I would lead you to consider Christ's positive Prediction of the Destruction of the Temple of *Jerusalem*; — the Overthrow of the City; — the Judgments upon the Jewish Nation; — their final Dispersion; — and the Time when this would be; and these will prove him to have been a divine Prophet.

4. The Destruction of the Temple, &c.

Q. Can you tell me any Texts, which refer to these Events?

If not, I shall refer you to a few.

Matth. xxiv. 1, 2. Here we see the entire Destruction of the Temple is described. — *Luke xix. 41 to 45.* Here the Destruction of the City, with the remarkable Circumstance of its being most closely intrenched, (which, as *Josephus* the Jewish Historian relates, was the Case) is expressly foretold. — *Luke xxi. 22, 23, 24.* Here is a Prediction of the Miseries of the People, the Fulfilment of which you would be satisfied of, were you to read the above Historian's Account of the

unspeakable Evils which fell on them *.—
Luke xxi. 24. Here is the Captivity and
 Disperſion of the Jews, which Diſperſion has
 laſted from that Time to this. — Laſtly,
 read *Matth.* xxiv. 34. *Matth.* xxii. 36, 37,
 38. *Luke* xxi. 29—34. Here the Time is
 fixed, when all theſe Evils ſhould come to
 paſs, and *Joſephus*, and other Hiſtorians, will
 inform you, it came to paſs before that Ge-
 neration of Men expired.

Now, all this is the more remarkable;
 becauſe, in Chriſt's Time, the Jews were a
 flouriſhing People, and appeared in a ſettled
 State.

APPLICATION.

Remember and labour to improve theſe
 Things; and conſider theſe Prophecies were
 not only delivered by Chriſt, but wrote and
 diſperſed into many Hands, before theſe
 Events came to paſs. For this I could give
 you abundant Teſtimony. Remember alſo
 that the Temple and City have never
 been rebuilt †, and the Jews are ſtill

* See *Joſephus's* Wars of the Jews, Book VII.

† It may be worth obſerving, that *Julian* the Apo-
 ſtate reſolved the Rebuilding of this Temple, and ſet it
 on foot, giving full Encouragement to the Jews to do
 what they could to forward it, and committed the Care
 of the Work to *Abyſſus*. He thought this would be
 one means of weakening Chriſtianity; but this Deſign
 is ſaid to have been miraculoſly prevented. See
Etchard's Roman Hiſtory, Vol. III. p. 77. from *Ann.*
Marcel.

a dispersed People over the Face of the Earth *.

Q. Does not this look like an Answer to that Imprecation, *His Blood be on us, and on our Children!* Matth. xxvii. 24, 25?

Let us next consider the Argument arising from *the Miracles which Christ's Followers worked.*—These afford several Testimonies in Proof of the Truth of Christianity.——

2. Miracles performed by his Disciples after his Ascension.

Since, 1. Working Miracles was a Fulfilment of Christ's Predictions; for before he suffered, he foretold that his Disciples should perform miraculous Works, as has been shewn. 2. As every Miracle they worked in the Name of Christ was a Voucher to the Truth of his having come from God, and being gone to him; because they appealed to God for the Truth of this, by working Miracles in Christ's Name. 3. The Facts considered in themselves shewed the extraordinary Power of God with them; from whence we may well conclude, that what they taught and delivered was the Will of God.——

Q. When Christ had, in his Life-time, not only accurately foretold how he should be treated by his Friends and Enemies, how

* See this Subject of Christ's *Predictions* well-treated in the Bishop of London's Pastoral Letters, p. 54.

he

he should die, and when rise again, but also that his Disciples should, in a few Days after his Ascension, have Power from above to work Miracles, and proselyte Men to his Faith by this means, what could give more Evidence to Christ's divine Mission, than the Fulfilment of this last Promise, within the short Space referred to?

A. The Evidence is indeed very strong and affecting.

Q. Must not he have foreknown the Counsel of God?

Q. As his Disciples worked Miracles in his Name, did they not prove, by this particular Reference to him, that he was the Approved of God, that he had come from him, and was gone to him?

Q. Would God, think you, have permitted his Power to be used in such a manner, according to Christ's Prediction, to avouch a Falshood?

A. Most certainly he would not.

Q. Would God have bore witness to Christ during his Life, and by his Resurrection, and afterwards also by enabling his Disciples to establish his Religion in the Face of all the World, by Appeals to God and Christ, for Power to testify the Truth of what they said, if what they said was not true?

A. To suppose so, is to suppose that he is a Friend to the Devil, the Father of Liars.

Q. Must

Q. Must you not believe, either that Christ was sent from God to teach and save Men, or else that God (with Awe be it spoken) bore his Testimony to a Falshood publicly, for a Course of Years?

Q. Can you think God will attest and set his Seal to what is not true? —

Thus the Religion which Jesus Christ set on foot, and which during all the time of his Preaching was attested by divine Power, (most wisely and kindly displayed) was also after his Departure confirmed in the same way, God bearing witness to the Propagation of that Religion, *both with Signs and Wonders, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will*, Heb. ii. 4. The History of the *Acts* of the Apostles gives you a full Account of this Matter, and most of the *Epistles*, in a very strong manner, prove the same thing; and, if it were necessary, I could give you other Proofs of it, and shew too, that God did not cease to bear public Testimony to Christ's Religion, till it had greatly spread, and taken deep Root *. — But this would lead us too far, and it is the less necessary; because, if you attend to the Progress this Religion made in the World, under the greatest Discouragements, you will

* See Appendix IV. to this Work, containing a View of some of the Miracles wrought by the Apostles.

be satisfied there must have been a divine Energy of some kind or other attending it.—

Let us next attend to the
 3. The Growth and Settlement of
 Spread and Christianity in the World.
 Establishment of
 Christianity
 in the World.

—That it is the most holy and self-denying Religion has been shewn. It makes no Allowances for sensual Indulgences, or for Craft, Flattery, or Force, but requires the highest Heavenly-mindedness, the greatest Sincerity, Honesty and Meekness. All its proposed Rewards were invisible from the World, and the greatest not to be had on this Side the Grave. Whereas it required a Readiness to undergo all public Disgrace, and the greatest present Evils of Body, Name and Estate, for a good Conscience and Adherence to the Faith.

Q. Is there any thing in all this likely to engage the Men of the World?

Q. Is such a Religion adapted to the Liking of sensual, ambitious and covetous Men?

Q. Are not the Generality of the World such? —

But here were several Things in Christ's Religion peculiarly unpopular.—Not only was the Gentile offended with having inferior Worship banished *, and being told he

* See Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses.

must dismiss all his Superstition, and his Nation's Gods, and worship God alone—Not only was the Jew offended with admitting all Men to the Favour of God equally with themselves, and having their Temple Worship superceded, &c. but Jew and Gentile were averse from submitting to an humbled, crucified Saviour. To quit (as they thought) *Moses* and their Philosophers for the teaching of plain and illiterate Men, Men of no Figure and Repute in the World. To leave the Religion, in which they had lived from their Infancy, (and to which they were consequently attached) for one thus handed to them, which, at the same time, was much more mortifying to sinful Affections than their own, and restrained them from the Liberty they had long enjoyed of *frequent Divorces*,—and *more Wives than one*, &c. two Things, which were directly against the general Practice of those Times.—With these and many other discouraging Attendants, Christian Religion set out.

Q. Do you think (looking no further than this) that such a Religion was ever likely to prevail in the World?

Q. Must not Jew and Gentile have had very strong Aversion to it? ———

If you were well acquainted with the History of the Church (nay of the Enemies of it) for the first 300 Years, you would see how

how this Aversion turned into implacable Hatred, and setting all the World against this Religion *. You would see what cruel Mockings and Scourgings, Loss of all Temporal Possessions, of Good Name, and of Life, (in the most ignominious and tormenting manner, that Malice and Cruelty could invent) went hand in hand with the public Profession of this Religion.—In short, you would see, that whatever Malice and Cruelty, supported by Cunning, rendered sacred by great and honourable Names, executed by Imperial Power, whatever these could do against any Cause, were done against the Cause of Christ, during the ten Persecutions. And yet, O wonderful Miracle! without temporal Views, without Craft, without secular Power, and against them all, this Grain of Mustard Seed spread, and bore down at last all its Oppressors, conquered the *Roman Empire*, and expelled all their Gods.—

Q. Must not God, think you, have been the Prosperer of this Cause?

* The sacred Historian has recorded, that the Jews at *Rome*, so early as St. *Paul's* first Imprisonment there, (which was about thirty Years after our Lord's Death) declared they knew that Christians were a Sect every where spoken against, and were to read what other Authors, Heathen and Christian, have wrote, of what was done as well as said against them, it would amaze you, and could be equalled only by *Popish* Persecutions.

Q. What

2. What more likely Way, than by miraculous Appearances, which strengthened the Faith of the suffering Christians, and an Assurance of God's Favour, and Heaven at last; which made them amazingly patient, so that they convinced many, and confounded all their Enemies?—

2. What is the Sum of what has been said under this Argument of subsequent Evidence for the Truth of Christian Religion?

A. 1st. The Fulfilment of Christ's Prophecies relating to the Descent of the Holy Ghost — The Treatment Christ's Apostles were to meet with—The Progress of his Religion in the World, and the Destruction of the Temple, &c.—2dly, The Miracles which his Followers worked in his Name—and 3dly, The wonderful Progress of Christian Religion in the World, considered as a Fact which required divine Power to bring it to pass.

APPLICATION.

Remember these Things when you set yourself to think of Arguments for Christian Religion, which *followed* Christ's Ascension, and learn to adore the Power and Wisdom of the Almighty in all this; and be sure to give up yourself to the *Government* of the Lord Jesus, without which you cannot be saved.—It would be almost endless were

L

I to

I to shew you all the Arguments which might be brought from other Heads ; as the extraordinary Conversion of *St. Paul*, who received by a particular Revelation from Christ, the Knowledge of Christianity *—the Appeals made by *St. Paul* (to the Christians to whom he wrote) to Miracles worked by him, and miraculous Gifts bestowed on them.—

Q. Would you (or any Person in his Senses) in writing serious and important Letters, refer to Facts as publickly done by you in the Presence of those you write to, (especially if you had Enemies among them) and appeal to miraculous Gifts bestowed by you, when those to whom you wrote had never seen such Facts, nor received such Powers?

Q. Would not this be the way to be despised as a Fool or Madman, or contemned and abhorred as an impudent Liar?—

A. It would be a most direct way to prove oneself a Liar.

Attend to the following Passages, and you'll be convinced that some of the Churches, to whom *St. Paul* wrote, must have known, either by credible Testimony, or seen and received his miraculous Gifts, or else that *St. Paul* was not to be credited. But yo'll

* *Vide* Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship, of *St. Paul*, in a Letter to *Gilbert West*, Esq; and the divine Commission of *St. Paul* examined and established. *Dr. Watt's* evangelical Discourses, Sermon. c.

see

night
extra-
to re-
from
*—
Chri-
work-
owed
his
Let-
ne by
e to,
(them)
ed by
e had
such
be de
emne
—
prov
s, an
arche
know
n an
e th
you
Apos
ss, E
ned a
Serm.

Chri-
work-
owed
his
Let-
ne by
e to,
them)
ed by
e had
such
be de
mne
—
prov
s, an
arche
now
n an
e th
yo
Apos
st, E
ned a
Serm.

Let-
one by
e to,
(them)
ed by
e had
such
be de
mne
—
prov
s, an
arche
know
n an
e th
you
Apos
ss, E
ned a
Serm.

ed by
e had
such
be de
emne
—
prov
s, an
arche
now
n an
e th
yo
Apos
ß, E
ned a
Serm.

provi
s, an
arche
now
n an
e th
yo-
Apos
st, E
ned a
Serm.

provi
s, an
arche
now
n an
e th
yo
Apost
ß, E
ned a
Serm.

prov
s, an
arche
now
n an
e th
yo
Apo
ß, E
ned a
Serm.

n an
 e th
 yo
 Apost
 ss, E
 ned a
 Serm.

Serm.

Serm.

Serm.

1

bleſſed Saviour in Proof that he came from God.

Q. Have you not had a third Sett of Arguments drawn from the Nature of his holy Religion? What were theſe called?

A. Inherent Arguments.

Q. Whence do theſe ariſe?

A. From the Tendency of his Religion to promote the Glory of God—the Cauſe of Truth and Righteouſneſs, and man's eternal Happineſs.

Q. Do you remember the fourth Sett of Proofs drawn from what followed on his Reſurrection, and what were theſe Arguments called?

A. Subſequent.

Q. What were the chief Things mentioned here?

A. The Completion of what Chriſt had foretold—the Miracles which his Followers worked—and the Spread and Eſtabliſhment of his Religion in the World.

Thus I have laid down before you Arguments *Antecedent*, *Concomitant*, *Inherent*, and *Subſequent*, in Proof of Chriſt's being the Sent of God, and his Religion being divine.—Under the laſt general Head I might have ſingled out, and delightfully enlarged on another Argument drawn from Fact and Experience, which laſts to this Day, and will continue ſo to do: I mean the *ſanctifying Influence of this holy Religion on all who truly live by it*, and the *inward Efficacy* of

of God's holy Spirit on the Hearts and Consciences of all sincere Believers, by which they have full Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel; and are able chearfully to mortify their Lusts, contemn this World, and lay down their Lives (as thousands have done) for the sake of Christ.* But I have been too long already, and therefore would rather direct you how to secure this Evidence (which will put all past possible Dispute) than tell you more of it. — The Way is to be *prayerful, honest, humble, and diligent, in the Practice of Christ's Commandments.* — Then you'll know by this inward Witness, that Christ came from God, and that his Religion is divine. — Take heed therefore lest, after all, you contemn him whom God has sent, or prove disobedient. — Keep these Words always in memory, which I leave with you. — *We ought to give the more earnest heed to the Things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every Transgression and Disobedience received a just Recompence of Reward: How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will?* Heb.

* See Faith built on Knowledge, Disc. ix. p. 192. Dr. Watt's Evan. Discr.

ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. — Weigh these Evidences, and then you'll be able to give a Reason of your Faith; and say,

“ My Heart became the Convert of my Head,

“ And made that *Choice*, which once was but my
“ *Fate*.” Night IV.

C H A P. VIII.

The Authenticness and divine Authority of the Books of the New Testament.

S E C T. I.

Authenticness.

Tutor. U Ndeniable Evidence may be given you, that for above 1600 Years past, there have been Books relating to the Birth, Life, Doctrine, and Transactions of Christ, which were received as writ by Apostles, and apostolical Men, and esteemed sacred; and this within the Age of Miracles, and by those very Persons who lived at the time, and were converted by their preaching, and the Wonders they wrought. — Thus it might be shewn you that there have been Books from the first Age of Christianity, which have had a sacred Regard paid to them in every Age, as containing the Religion of Jesus Christ; Books, which different Sects and Parties among Christians have equally esteemed authentic, and of divine Authority for directing their Faith, Practice, Hopes, and Fears.

—If you were capable of searching into the Christian Writers of the three first Centuries, the Evidence for this would be easily seen.—We cannot only prove there have been such Books in the Christian Church from the Age, in which the Apostles lived, but also that there have been such as those which we now have, which went under the same Names; and are the Books which were at first received for the Rule to direct Christians in Points of Faith and Practice. The full Proofs of all this would be too long for you, but however, it may be proper to take Notice of the following Things, to enable you to pass a Judgment concerning this Matter.

1. The Writings of the *Jews* and *Heathens* in the early Ages of the Church shew, there were such Writers as *Matthew*, *Mark*, &c. and such Books as their Gospels. *

2. In every Age from that Time to this Books were wrote, which are still in the Libraries of the Learned, that refer to some or other, or all of the Books of the New Testament as genuine, and of sacred Authority, and wrote by the Persons whose Names they now bear. And let it be observed *St. Paul's* Epistles (in which he so frequently asserts his Power of working Miracles) make up a great Part of those which were so received.

* See *Grotius* on the Truth of the Christian Religion, Book III. and *Le Clerc's* 3d Dissertation on the Writers of the Gospel. *Le Clerc's* Harm. of the Gospels.

3. There

3. There are not only in these Christian Writers References to those Books, but their own Writings are exactly agreeable to the Substance and Scheme of Things contained in these Books, as far as relates to Christ's Birth, Life, Doctrine, Miracles, Predictions, Death, Resurrection, Ascension to Heaven, Mission of the Holy Spirit, Government of his Church, the Sacraments of his Appointment, his final Appearance to raise the Dead, and judge the World.— These, and such like grand Foundation Parts of Christianity, are related by divers Authors, about 60 Years after Christ's Death;* and a very great part of the New Testament is actually quoted and incorporated into the Writings of some of the ancient Fathers, particularly *Ireneus*. Indeed there are so many Quotations in the Writers, that immediately followed the Apostles, or those who conversed with them, as plainly shew the full Agreement between the Scriptures in their Days and ours.

4. The early Dispersion of these Books among all Christians, of different Nations and Languages, and the Agreement which is now seen to be among them, as appears by looking into those various Copies and ancient Manuscripts of the New Testament.

* See the genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers, translated by *Wake*, and the ingenious and learned Dr. *Lardner's* Extracts from ancient Authors, &c. in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*.

5. The early settling the Canon of Scripture in a solemn Council held at *Laodicea*, *cir. A. D. 357.* (*V. S. S. Concilia Tom. pr. p. 1507.*) and the Attempts of the Heathens to destroy these Writings, and the Brand set upon those Christians who delivered them up to avoid Persecution, having the Name of *Traditores* given them by way of Infamy.

Lastly, the manner of handing these Books down from Age to Age, prevents any Mistake about them; being from that time to this publicly read in the Church, and the principal Facts commemorated by Fasts and Feast Days——by significant Symbols, as in Baptism and the Lord's Supper, Ministers set apart to read those Books, and teach the Doctrines contained in them—the summary of the Christian Faith contained in the Creed, &c. ——— These, and many other Things which might be mentioned * bring in concurrent Evidence to this Truth; *That the Writings of the New Testament which we now have, are the very same that the Christian Church had from the Beginning.* —You might be led further to attend to the internal Evidence for the Genuineness of these Books, arising from Acquaintance with the History of the Times wherein Christ lived. † — Also the manner of writing,

* See what has been said Chap. 5. Sect. 3. relating to this Point.

† See *Lardner's Gospel Credibility*, Vol. I.

which

which discovers the greatest Probity and Honesty in the Writers, but these Things would carry us too far. — Remember that you may receive (if you will be at pains to search for it) abundant Evidence for the New Testament's having been wrote as early as the first Age of Christianity, and by Apostles, and apostolic Men. — Consider in the next place a few Things, which will shew that the holy Writers of these Books certainly wrote the Truth——without dispute they were capable Judges of Facts by their own Senses, or by Evidence from those who had received sensible Proof——And you may be satisfy'd they wrote the Truth, because they wrote for Persons who were Judges of the Truth of what they said, either by personal Knowledge, or by the easiest Methods of Information, by enquiring whether such and such Facts were done or not, which not having been long before, they might easily satisfy themselves concerning. And then the State of Persecution, which the first Christians were in, would lead them to expect the clearest Evidence about the Truth of that, for which they were about to renounce the Religion of their Education, Family, Friends, and Country ; and to risk Name, Estate, and Life, without any Equivalent in this World. We may be sure Men will have full satisfaction, be-

* *Vide* That excellent Work, *Baxter's Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Vol. II. p. 119, p. 242. and his Saint or a Brute, p. 672 *seq.*

fore they will sacrifice all that is so dear to them : Therefore we may be sure that the first Christians were fully satisfied on this Head.—Indeed it may be further observed that they give the strongest Marks of their Sincerity and Honesty in all they write relating their Jewish Prejudices—erroneous Opinions—wrong Conduct, &c. which cannot be fairly referred to any other Cause, than their regard to Truth and Duty.—Add to this, if they had not been fully persuaded of Christ's divine Mission, and that he would reward them hereafter for all their Sufferings, they could not (from the very Make of human Nature, which necessitates a Man to pursue something under the Notion of Happiness) have undergone such sore Evils as they did, and persisted patient and vigorous to the Death. And as sure as they were of Christ's divine Mission, so sure they must have been of the Necessity of Truth and Honesty in all their Words, Writings, and Actions, as Qualifications for acceptance with a God of Truth, and as Terms for receiving the Reward they hoped for ; for it was an Article of their Faith that all Liars are to be excluded from Heaven. Now the Happiness of Heaven was the only Reward they expected for all their Self-denials, and Sufferings unto Death.—Therefore you may be sure they took care not to loose their All by allowing themselves in

propagating Lies and Deceit by Writing or any other way.

Q. Should you not from these several Considerations laid together, conclude that the holy Scriptures of the New Testament are safely handed down to us, and are the same as at first they were?

A. I see not how any Books can be transmitted with more clear and strong Evidence of their Genuineness; nor what more can be desired to satisfy an honest Enquirer of the Truth of these Writings, and that they are come down safely to us.

Q. Should you not conclude from hence that all, which is related by such Persons, is certainly true, and (as they were authorised by Christ) that what they wrote ought to direct our Faith and Practice.—Thus you have been assisted to see some of the Evidence, which may be brought to prove that the Scriptures of the New Testament were wrote by those Apostles and Followers of Christ, whose Names they bear:—And moreover, that they had a sacred Regard to Truth in all they wrote; and thus their Authenticness and Value appear, when considered in no other View but what is common to other Writings. But there is another Consideration to be taken into the Account before us; which is, that these Authors were the Messengers of Jesus Christ, set apart to teach and establish his Religion in the World, and therefore were under the Guidance

Guidance of the Spirit of God, and so their Writings are of divine Authority ; the Evidence of which I shall (tho' in a very brief manner) assist you to perceive.

S E C T. II.

Divine Authority, &c.

Tutor. **N**OT only are you to regard the holy Scriptures of the New Testament as the Writings of knowing (in regard to what they relate) and honest Men, but also I might lead you much further, and shew that the Apostles, &c. were under divine Guidance in what they wrote ; and therefore these Books are not to be regarded only as the Writings of very honest and upright Men, but as *the Word of God*. That they were under such Direction, when they wrote, you may easily conclude. For,

1. I appeal to your own Judgment, whether it be not reasonable to think that when God had given such abundant Testimony to Jesus Christ and his Apostles, as has been shewn, he would take care that the principal Things done and taught by Christ and his first Followers should be committed to Writing for the Information and Direction of those who should live in after Ages ? Hence arises a Presumption that there were Books wrote by some of Christ's Apostles,

M

which

which contained an Account of his Life, Actions, and Doctrines; and it has appeared matter of Fact that so it was.—

Q. I ask again, 2dly, Is it not most reasonable to conclude that those Persons, who were extraordinarily assisted to preach the Gospel, and spread it in the World by their personal Labours and Word of Mouth, should be helped also by the same Spirit, when they wrote for the Establishment and Spread of Christianity to the Ends of the Earth, and the End of Time?—

Q. If they received the Spirit of Truth to lead them into all Truth, mayn't you be sure they were under his Direction when they wrote, as well as when they taught the Gospel?—

You see therefore it is natural to conclude that God having sent his Son to teach and save the World, and having borne miraculous Testimony to him, would take care that the Sum of his Religion, and the Evidence on which the Truth of it was founded should be preserved in the World by a surer Way than *oral Tradition &c.* and no better way can be thought of than by Books wrote by Persons who were personally concerned about these Matters; and who were either Eye-witnesses, or received their Intelligence from those who were. And it is no less certain that those Persons, who were under the Guidance

Guidance and Influence of God's holy Spirit, to the End they might effectually propagate the Christian Faith, would be enabled to do it by *Writing* as well as Speaking, by *composing Histories* as well as verbally relating them; by writing Letters to the Churches as well as visiting them. This is so apparent, that nothing more need be said upon it.——

I shall therefore only ask you whether you remember any Declarations of our blessed Lord, relating to his Disciples receiving the Spirit of God to be their Comforter, Teacher, and Guide, in propagating his Religion?

2. Do you remember any Passages to this Purpose?——If you do not, you may turn (not to mention more) to no less than four in our Lord's Discourse with his Disciples, just when he was going to be parted from them by Death (which makes them the more remarkable) *John* xiv. 16, 17, and 26. Here we find Christ declares that the Holy Ghost should be sent of God, was to dwell with them, and be in them; and should teach them all Things, and bring all Things to their Remembrance which he had said unto them, *John* xv. 26. Here it appears that the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father was to be with them, and was to testify of Christ. So again, *John* xvi. 7—16.

Hence it appears Christ's Disciples were to be directed and guided by this Spirit, and Christ was to be glorified by him, &c. therefore you may be sure they were directed *in all they taught* (for the propagating of his Religion in the World) by the *holy Spirit* of God; and therefore you may be certain they were in composing those Writings which were the best, if not the only natural Means of conveying down to future Generations the Knowledge of Christ and his holy Religion, and the Evidence given of the Truth of it; that therefore the Writings of the New Testament are of *divine Authority*, and are to be regarded as the Writings or *Word of God*, being composed under the Direction of his *divine Spirit*.——

Q. Should you not therefore daily read these Scriptures with a religious regard?

Q. Will you not be chargeable with great Contempt of God and the Redeemer, and the holy Spirit, if you neglect to meditate on those Things which have been wrote under the Direction of the *Spirit of God*?——

A. Yes, I own it will be casting Contempt upon them if I neglect my *Bible*.

But sooner may I slight my Health, my Friends, my Food,

Than the *sweet Pages* of my Saviour and my God!

To conclude, remember therefore that St. Paul (who was taught under the Direction of this

this Spirit) instructed young *Timothy*, *Continue thou in the Things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a Child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, thro' Faith which is in Christ Jesus: All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works, 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15, 16, 17.*—

APPLICATION.

Be sure therefore regard the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as Books wrote under the Influence and Direction of God's holy Spirit.* Attend therefore

M 3

* Nothing has been said in Proof of the divine Authority of the Old Testament, because it would make the Work longer, and because it appears less needful, since its Authority is sufficiently established; by considering that the *Lord Jesus* refers to it as of divine Authority, (appealing to it as containing the Will of God) by considering also the Prophecies it contains. The above Passage of *St. Paul, 2 Tim. iii. 14 seq.* settles the Point also; and it is very remarkable that our Saviour before he left the World, set himself to explain the Sense of the Old Testament to his Disciples, *Luke xxiv. 26, 27. And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the Things concerning*

fore to them, my young Friend, with *Diligence, Preparation, and Prayer*; receive the Truths contained in them with *Faith and Love*; lay them up in your *Memory and Heart*, and by God's Grace, *practice* them in your *Life*, so they will become a sure Means of temporal and eternal Happiness, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

For, to add no more, it is positively declared, *Prov. xiii. 13. Who so despiseth the Word shall be destroyed; but he that feareth (i. e. reverently submits to) the Commandment, shall be rewarded.*

See the Case represented clearly in the whole first Psalm: And may God of his infinite Mercy make you a *bright Example* of so much of it, as the following elegant Lines contain.

“ He, like a Plant of generous Kind,

“ By living Waters set,

“ Safe from the Storms and blasting Wind,

“ Enjoys a peaceful State.

“ Green as the Leaf, and even fair,

“ Shall his Profession shine;

“ While Fruits of Holiness appear

“ Like Clusters on the Vine.”

Pf. i. Dr. Watts.

cerning himself. This he did in so affecting a Manner as raised the highest Delight in his two Hearers, so that they would not part with him (ver. 29, 32.) and on his Appearance to the Eleven, he refers them to the Law of *Moses*, the Prophets, and the Psalms (ver. 44.) and opened their Understanding that they might *understand the Scriptures*, (ver. 45.) All which proves he esteemed the Old Testament to be of divine Authority.

Or

Or in JOHNSTON's charming Dress.

- " Arboris in morem furget, felicibus auris,
 " Quæ viret, ad ripam lene fluentis aquæ ;
 " Cui tempestivis curvantur brachia pomis,
 " Nullaque vernantes decutit aura comas :
 " Illius adspirans votis clementia cœli
 " Omnia propitio fidere cœpta reget.

APPENDIX I.

*Remarkable Providences towards the Wicked,
 in their Punishment; and the Religious in
 their Deliverance, from holy Scripture.*

Cain. **M**Y Punishment is greater than I
 can bear——

The *Antediluvians*, whose Wickedness was
 exceeding great, and they perished by
 the Deluge.

Inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, con-
 sumed by Fire and Brimstone from Heaven.

Pharaoh and the *Egyptians* visited with
 Plagues, and at last drowned in the *Red Sea*.

The Spies that brought up evil Report of
 the Land of *Canaan*, all died of the Plague
 before the Lord ; but *Joshua* and *Caleb* lived.

Numb. xiv. 37.

Korab, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, for their
 wicked Rebellion against God, were swallow-
 ed

ed up by the Earth's cleaving asunder that was under them. *Numb. xvi. 31, seq.*

Adoni-bezek forced to own the just Judgment of God upon himself. *Judges i. 7.*

Abalom, by most unrighteous Means, aiming to dethrone his Father, was hung in an Oak and slain, and his Body cast into a Pit. *2 Sam. xviii.*

Wicked King *Abab*, tho' disguised, was slain in Battle; and the Dogs licked his Blood in the Place where they had licked the Blood of *Naboth*. *1 Kings xxi. 19.* compar'd with chap. xxii. 38.

Add to these the History of *Abaz*, *Sannacherib*, *Manasseh*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Belsazzar*, *Judas* the Traitor, *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, &c. and judge whether the Almighty has not given the fullest Evidence of his being a Sin-hating God——

On the other hand that he loves the Righteous.

Noah was saved when the World was drowned, for he walked with God, and was a just Man, and found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord. *Gen. vi. 8, 9.*

Righteous *Lot* was saved, and the City *Zoar* at his Intercession. *Gen. xix. 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8.*

Moses and the Children of *Israel* were brought safe out of *Egypt*. *Exod. xv.*

Caleb and *Joshua* survived all the Murmurers, and were possessed of the Land of *Canaan*.

Canaan. Joshua xiv. 6—15. [A Passage that deserves to be wrote on the Heart.]

David was carried thro' all his Dangers, and seated on the Throne of all *Israel. 2 Sam. vii.*

Elijah was fed by Ravens, preserved from all Attempts against his Life, and at last taken up miraculously into Heaven. *2 Kings ii.*

The pious Kings of *Judah* were remarkably succoured of God in all their Straits, viz. *Asa, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, &c.* [The whole 2d Book of *Chronicles* should be often read.] *Daniel* also was saved from the Lion's Den; the three Children from the fiery Furnace; *St. Peter* from Prison, when fast bound with two Chains to two Soldiers, *Acts xii.* *St. Paul*, when all Men forsook him, and he was in Danger by the Mouth of the Lion [*Nero*] the Lord stood by him and strengthened and delivered him, *2 Tim. iv. 16, 17.* [See more in Appendix IV. under the Head of Miracles wrought for the Deliverance of the Apostles; and consult, *2 Corin. vi. 4—11. 2 Corin. xi. 23—30. 2 Tim. iii.*]

A P P E N D I X II.

A brief View of some of our Saviour's mighty Works.

HE healed all manner of Sickneſſes, and all manner of Diſeaſes among the People; and his Fame went throughout all Syria: And they brought unto him all ſick People that were taken with divers Diſeaſes and Torments, and thoſe which were poſſeſſed with Devils, and thoſe which were Lunatick, and thoſe which had the Pally; and he healed them. *Matth. iv. 23, 24.*

They brought unto him many that were poſſeſſed with Devils, and he caſt out the Spirits with his Word, and healed all that were Sick. *Matth. viii. 16.*

When he came into the Land of *Genneſaret*, they ſent out into all the Country round about, and brought unto him all that were diſeaſed, and they beſought him that they might only touch *the Hem of his Garment*; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole. *Matth. xiv. 35, 36.*

Great Multitudes came to him when he was aſcended up into a Mountain, and brought with them the **Lame**, **Blind**, **Dumb**, **Maimed**, and ſome others, and caſt them down

at Jesus's Feet, and he healed them: In-
much that the Multitude wondered when
they saw (when they found) the Dumb to
speak, &c. *Matth.* xv. 30, 31. Nay, in
the Temple at *Jerusalem*, the Blind and the
Lame came to him, and he healed them. *Matt.*
xxi. 14.—To add no more under this gene-
ral Representation, he conveyed the same Pow-
er to his 12 Apostles, and the 70 Disciples;
he gave them Power against unclean Spirits,
and to heal all manner of Sickness, and all
manner of Disease. *Matt.* x. 1. and *Luke*
x. 1.—For some of the particular Mira-
cles recorded, consider the following.

Ten Lepers at once healed by him——A
Woman that had labour'd under an Issue of
Blood 12 Years, healed by only touching
the Hem of his Garment——A Man that
had an Infirmary 38 Years, and had waited
at the Pool of *Bethesda*, was restored to Health
at his Word——A Nobleman's Son reco-
vered from a most dangerous Fever at the
point of Death, by Christ's Word, tho' he
was far distant from him——The Daugh-
ter of the *Syrophean* Woman dispossessed
also by his Authority, and the Centurion's
Servant when he yet came not near them——
The Man born blind——The Paralytick
Man who was brought on a Couch to him, sent
away able to carry that on which he lay——
He walked on the Sea——Calmed Tempests
and Storms with his Voice——Dried up a
flourishing

flourishing Fig-tree—Fed 4000 Men beside Women and Children, with seven Loaves and a few little Fishes ; and on another Occasion fed 5000 Men, beside Women and Children, with five Loaves and two Fishes—He raised the Daughter of *Jairus* from her Death-bed——The only Son of the Widow of *Naim* from the Bier on which he lay, carried to be buried——And *Lazarus* actually from the Grave, after he had been dead four Days——He struck all his Enemies, who came to seize on him in the Garden, to the Ground, only by saying *I am he!*—He foretold that he would raise his own Body from the Dead in three Days, and so he arose from the Dead on the third Day—

APPENDIX III.

The Course and Manner of Christ's Life.

HE was much in Prayer, retiring for that End into private Places, and spent (it's likely more than) once a whole Night in Prayer.

When he came up from being baptized, he kneeled down and prayed.

He prayed with his Disciples, and taught them to pray ; and that Men should pray always and never faint, and gave the bright-
est

est Example of it in his last Sufferings, praying again and again, and when in an *Agony* * yet praying *more earnestly*——

His Life was a constant Endeavour to glorify God his Father and to please him—— So that he could say, *My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work*, John iv. 34. *I do always those Things that please him*, John viii. 29. *I seek not my own Glory*, John viii. 50. *For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me*, John vi. 38.

His Conversation was most heavenly, spiritual, and improving; turning common Occurrences into Fuel for religious Flame.

He was easy of Access to all Men, and especially tender of the Humble and Penitent, and refused not to converse with the chief of Sinners for their Conversion.

His Days were filled up with teaching Men the Mind and Will of God: For which End, he travelled through all *Judea* and *Galilee*, preaching and teaching in all their Synagogues.

His Works towards Men were Works of *Love* and *Mercy*, in all wise Means for the Salvation of their Souls, and most chearful Readiness to heal all their Distempers, free them from the Power of evil Spirits, and assuage their Grievs——Therefore he

* And on the Cross prayed for his Enemies.

said to the Widow mourning for her only Son dead, and about to be buried—*Weep not.* And he actually wept himself in Sympathy with his Friends, *Mary* and *Martha*, nay he grieved, and sighed, and wept for the hardness of the Hearts of his Enemies; and beholding *Jerusalem* he wept over it, saying, *If Thou hadst known, even Thou, at least in this thy Day, the Things which belong to thy Peace; (that is, O that thou hadst!) but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* Luke xix. 41, 42.

On the Sabbath he was strict in his regard to the publick Worship of God; for it was *his Custom* to go into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-day. *Luke* iv. 16.

He had the sacred Oracles (the Word of God) in his Heart, and made use of them in the Temptations he met with from the Devil (*Matt.* iv. 3—11) and his Discourses abounded therewith, and he sent his Followers to study the same.

He was mortified to this Life, patiently bore all Hardship; strenuously opposed Superstition, and human Corruptions in Religion; most sharply reprov'd Hypocrites, and Teachers that were immoral; and died as an attoning Sacrifice for Sin, the most shameful painful Death, and in Attestation to the Truth of what he had taught.

O glorious Image of the Father's Grace!
In him we find whatever merits Praise.

APPEN-

A P P E N D I X. IV.

*A brief View of some of the Miracles wrought
by the Apostles.*

A Man lame from his Mother's Womb, who was carried and laid daily at the Gate of the Temple which was called Beautiful, was restored to the free Use of his Limbs, by *Peter's* saying to him: *In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.* Acts iii.

Ananias and *Sapphira*, for lying to the Holy Ghost, were struck with Death. Acts v.

At *Samaria* St. *Philip* wrought many Miracles: Unclean Spirits crying with a loud Voice, came out of many that were possessed by them; and many taken with Palsies and that were lame, were healed. Acts viii.

Eneas of *Lydda*, had kept his Bed eight Years, and was sick of a Palsy: And *Peter* said unto him, *Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: Arise and make thy Bed.* And he arose immediately. Acts ix. 32.—36.

Tabitha or *Dorcas*, a Woman full of good Works and Alms-deeds, was raised from the Dead by St. *Peter*, Acts ix. 36—43.

Elymas the Sorcerer, struck blind by *St. Paul* for a Season, because he opposed the preaching of the Gospel, and sought to turn away the Deputy, *Surgius Paulus*, from the Faith. *Acts* xiii.

A Cripple from his Birth, who never had walked, was at *Lysra* restored by *St. Paul* to his Limbs: He said to him, *Stand upright on thy Feet*, and he leaped and walked. *Acts* xiv.

A Damsel at *Philippi* possessed with a Spirit, was dispossessed by *St. Paul's* saying to the Spirit, *I command thee in the Name of Jesus Christ to come out of her*. *Acts* xvi.

Eutychus, a young Man at *Troas*, raised from Death to Life by *St. Paul*. *Acts* xx.

The Father of *Publius*, Governor of the Island of *Melita*, lying sick of a Fever, and of a bloody Flux; *St. Paul* entered where he was, and prayed and laid his Hands on him, and healed him. And others also which had Diseases in the Island, came and were healed. *Acts* xxviii.—

In general it is related that, by the Hands of the *Apostles* (so including all the *Apostles*, but all their Acts are not recorded) were many Signs and Wonders wrought among the People—Insomuch that they brought forth the Sick into the Streets, and laid them on Beds and Couches, &c.—There came also a multitude out of the Cities round about
unto

unto *Jerusalem*, bringing sick Folks, and them which were vexed with unclean Spirits; and they were healed every one. *Acts* v. 12, 15, 16.

And its declared that God wrought *special Miracles* by the Hands of *Paul*, &c. *Acts* xix. 11, 12.

Its no less remarkable what Miracles God himself wrought in *their Favour* and for their *Deliverance*.—They were all filled with the extraordinary Power of the *holy Spirit* on the Day of Pentecost, so as to be enabled to speak various kinds of Languages, *Acts* ii.

The Apostles were cast into the common Prison by the high Priest, and the Angel of the Lord by Night opened the Prison-doors and brought them out, *Acts* v.

Saul was miraculously converted, *Acts* ix.

Herod cast *St. Peter* into Prison, and he was between two Soldiers bound with two Chains, and the Keepers before the Door kept the Prison; and the Angel of the Lord was sent (at the Time the Church was praying for him) and set him free, *Acts* xii.

At *Lystra* *St. Paul* was stoned to Death in the Opinion of all, but he rose to Life, *Acts* xiv.

Paul and *Silas* in the inner Prison with their Feet fast in the Stocks, sing Praises unto God at Midnight; and suddenly an Earthquake so shook the Foundation of the

Prison, that all the Doors opened, and every ones Bands were loosed, *Acts xvi.*

When all Hope that the Ship in which *St Paul* was Prisoner should be saved was taken away, God gave him all that failed with him, and there was no Loss of any Man's Life, *Acts xxvii.*

Once more, when a Viper fastened on his Hand, and those around him concluded he was pursued by Vengeance, and was a Murderer; looking when he would have swollen or fallen down dead suddenly, he receiv'd no hurt. *Acts xxviii.*

After reading these Things, may the Reader say, (taught from above) in *Milton's* Lines.

- " Greatly instructed I shall hence depart ;
- " Greatly in Peace of Thought ; and have my Fill
- " Of Knowledge, what this Vessel can contain :
- " Beyond which, was my Folly to aspire !
- " Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,
- " And love, with Fear, the only God : to walk
- " As in his Presence ; ever to observe
- " His Providence ; and on him sole depend.
- " Merciful over all his Works ! with Good
- " Still overcoming Evil ; and by small
- " Accomplishing great Things ; by Things deem'd
- " weak
- " Subverting worldly strong ; and worldly wise
- " By simply meek ; that suffering for Truth's sake
- " Is Fortitude to highest Victory ;
- " And to the Faithful, Death the Gate of Life ;
- " Taught this by his Example, whom I now
- " Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest !"

EPITOME of the WORK: To be
committed to Memory.

WHO is a religious Person; and what
are the Evidences for Natural and
Revealed Religion?

He that sincerely aims to please the *Lord*,
Reveres his holy Will, obeys his Word:
With steady View regards his searching Eye,
And fears to offend, because the *Lord* is nigh.
Excellence, Reason, Profit, all combine
To draw our Souls to Service so divine,
With strong Necessity, th' *Almighty's* Call;
Woe to the Wretch that spurns, and slights them all!
How fair the Proofs of an eternal Mind;
Most knowing, wise, all-powerful and kind!
The World around, from *ev'ry Part*, brings in
Its Testimonial to this *heavenly King*.
What every Part declares, the whole resounds
With triple Accents, and harmonious Sounds;
A God! a God of Power and Love unknown!
Adore, *Theophilus*, before his Throne.
Joyous the Thought! 'tis he preserves, and reigns
O'er the wide Earth, and Nature's spacious Plains.
Hence beautiful Order, smiling Plenty, Peace;
Hence Sinners find their *Pain*, good Men their *Ease*.
Pain suits with *Sin*, with moral Good *Delight*:
No greater Opposites than *Wrong* and *Right*.
Be careful, *Philos*, blend not Good with Ill,
Fight not with Truth, against thy Maker's Will.
Souls are immortal, *Reason* this describes,
And sets a future State before our Eyes;
Where God will shine in *Grace*, and awful Ire,
By Saints in *Joy*, and Sinners doom'd to *Fire*.
Lose not these Truths: Yet set not down with these
A mere Disciple of a *Socrates*;

Embrace

140 E P I T O M E *of the* W O R K .

Embrace the *special Doctrines* Christ has taught,
And glory in th' Effects his Death has wrought.
O hearken to the Message God reveal'd,
By his dear Son, with his Commission seal'd.

I.

By various *Prophecies* minutely plan'd,
Which all in him alone compleated stand:
His Person, Birth, his Love in Word and Deed,
His Treatment, Temper, Death, and Life decreed:

II.

By *Miracles* he prov'd from whom he came,
Gave Healing to the Sick, Limbs to the Lame;
Sight to the Blind, and Speech unto the Dumb,
Life to the Dead, and rais'd one from his Tomb.

III.

His *Doctrine*, and his Life, alike divine,
In both the Lustre of the Godhead shine;
And, by the Virtue of his *Merits*, when he died,
Captives are freed, the Guilty justify'd.

IV.

He verify'd *Predictions of his own*,
'Rose from the Dead, and sent his Spirit down:
His Gospel spread, and Miracles were done
Where e'er he sent to make his Blessings known.

Search for these Truths the *Bible's* sacred Page,
Nor Sceptic grow, dear *Philo*, in this faithless Age.
These Records are divine, if ought is true,
As all *internal and external Proofs* do shew *.

* I can't satisfy myself without refering the inquisitive Reader to the excellent Performances of the truly Great and Reverend *Mr. Baxter*, in his Reasons of the Christian Religion, and more Reasons for the Christian Religion, &c. from whence the Author hath drawn much Light and Assistance, and is perswaded conscientious Enquirers would do so likewise.

F I N I S .

C O N T E N T S.

CHAP. I.

I N T R O D U C T I O N to RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

SECT. I. <i>Definition and Explanation of the Term Religion</i>	Page 1
SECT. II. <i>Excellency of Religion</i>	5
SECT. III. <i>Reasonableness of Religion</i>	7
SECT. IV. <i>Advantage of Religion</i>	8
SECT. V. <i>Obligation of Religion</i>	11

CHAP. II.

Plainest Arguments for the Being and Providence of Almighty God.

SECT. I. <i>From the Wisdom, Power and Goodness visible in the several Parts of the Creation</i>	14
SECT. II. <i>From the Relation, &c. of the several Parts, to the Preservation and Benefit of the Whole</i>	21
SECT. III. <i>Various Proofs of God's Providence, and eight further Proofs mentioned of his Being and Perfections</i>	24

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

- SECT. I. *Of the Difference between moral
Good and Evil* Page 36
- SECT. II. *Of a future State of Rewards and
Punishments* 42

CHAP. IV.

*Arguments in Proof of the Truth of Christian
Religion.*

1. *Antecedent.* 2. *Concomitant.* 3. *Inbe-
rent.* 4. *Subsequent.*

- SECT. I. *Antecedent Proofs, presumptive* 50
- SECT. II. *Antecedent Proofs direct a Gain
of Prophecies* 56

CHAP. V.

2. *Concomitant Proofs by Miracles, &c.* 69

CHAP. VI.

3. *Inherent Proofs, or internal from the Na-
ture of Christian Religion* 81

CHAP. VII.

4. *Subsequent Arguments.*

1. *Christ's Predictions compleated* 95
2. *Miracles performed by his Disciples, after
his Ascension* 103
3. *Spread*

CONTENTS. 143

3. *Spread and Establishment of Christianity in the World, with the Argument summed up*
 Page 106

CHAP. VIII.

Evidence for the Authenticness and divine Authority of the Book of the New Testament.

SECT. I. *Authenticness* 114

SECT. II. *Divine Authority, &c.* 121

APPENDIX I. *Remarkable Providences, &c.*
 127

APPENDIX II. *Brief View of our precious Saviour's mighty Works* 130

APPENDIX III. *The Course and Manner of his Life* 132

APPENDIX IV. *A View of some of the Miracles wrought by the Apostles* 135

Epitome of the Work 139

ERRATA.

PAGE 22, line 6, for *and as*, read *and this as*.
 p. 66, l. 29, dele *be*. p. 100, in the Note, for
 19, read 195. p. 108, in fifth Line in the Note, after
and were, read *you*. p. 111, l. 17, for *Rea*, read
Reasons, and 25, for *bi*, read *his*. p. 126, l. 12, for
Summits, read *submits*.

This Day is published, Price 6d. The fourth Edition of
A BELIEVER'S EVIDENCE for HEAVEN:
Or, A short Essay for Christian Comfort, or
spiritual Joy. Wherein, by the plainest and most fa-
miliar Expressions, a weak Christian may be able to
make out his Title to the heavenly Inheritance; or to
make his Calling and Election sure. Sincerely attempted
in order to enlarge the Heart of a true Christian, to run
the Ways of God's Commandments; and render the
Yoke of Christ easy, and his Burden light; and make
way for a true Believer's comfortable Death.

By WILLIAM NOTCUTT.

Isaiah xi. 1. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my People, saith
your God: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.*

2 Cor. xii. 5. *Examine yourselves whether you be in
the Faith, prove your own selves.*

Printed for R. HETT, at the Bible and Crown in
the Poultry.

Of whom may be had, by the same Author,

I. Six Sermons on the Person, Offices, and Quali-
fications of *Jesus Christ*. Price 1 s.

II. A Compendium of the Covenant of Works and
Grace, &c. Price 1 s. 6 d.

Also may be had, just published,

Thirteen Sermons on the following Subjects; viz.
Of the Worth of the Soul, and the Folly of losing it.
On divine Providence. Of the Connection between
Faith and Salvation. The Wisdom of worldly Men, a
Reproof to that of good Men. Of the Government of
the Spirit. Of the prevailing Love of Pleasure. Of
Declensions in Religion. Of the Abuse of national
Privileges. By JOHN BARKER. Price 4 s.

Sacramental Exercises. In two Parts. 1. The Chri-
stian's Employment before, at, and after the Lord's
Supper. 2. The Christian's Conduct in his After-Life.
By *Jabez Earle*, D. D. The fourth Edition. Price 1 s.

A Vindication of the Scripture-Doctrine of Original
Sin, from Mr. *John Taylor's* free and candid Examina-
tion of it. Price 1 s. 6 d.

The Doctrine of Original Sin, as laid down in the
Assembly's Catechism explained, proved to be agreeable
to Scripture and Reason, and vindicated as a Truth of
the greatest Importance: With some plain express Tes-
timonies of Christian Writers before *Augustine*. By
Samuel Hebdon, of *Wrentham*. Price 1 s. I

on of
E N :
rt, or
oft fa-
ble to
or to
npted
o run
er the
make

saith

be in

vn in

Quali-

s and

viz.

ng it.

ween

en, a

ent of

Of

tional

Chri-

ord's

-Life.

ce 11.

iginal

mina-

n the

reable

uth of

Tef-

By